Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-SEVEN • NUMBER TWO • FEBRUARY 1989

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Joshua Muravchik

Victorian Values/Jewish Values
Gertrude Himmelfarb

Life Under Communism Today
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Oral History—A Story
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Books in Review: Donald Kagan/Steven Bayme/ David Brock/George Russell

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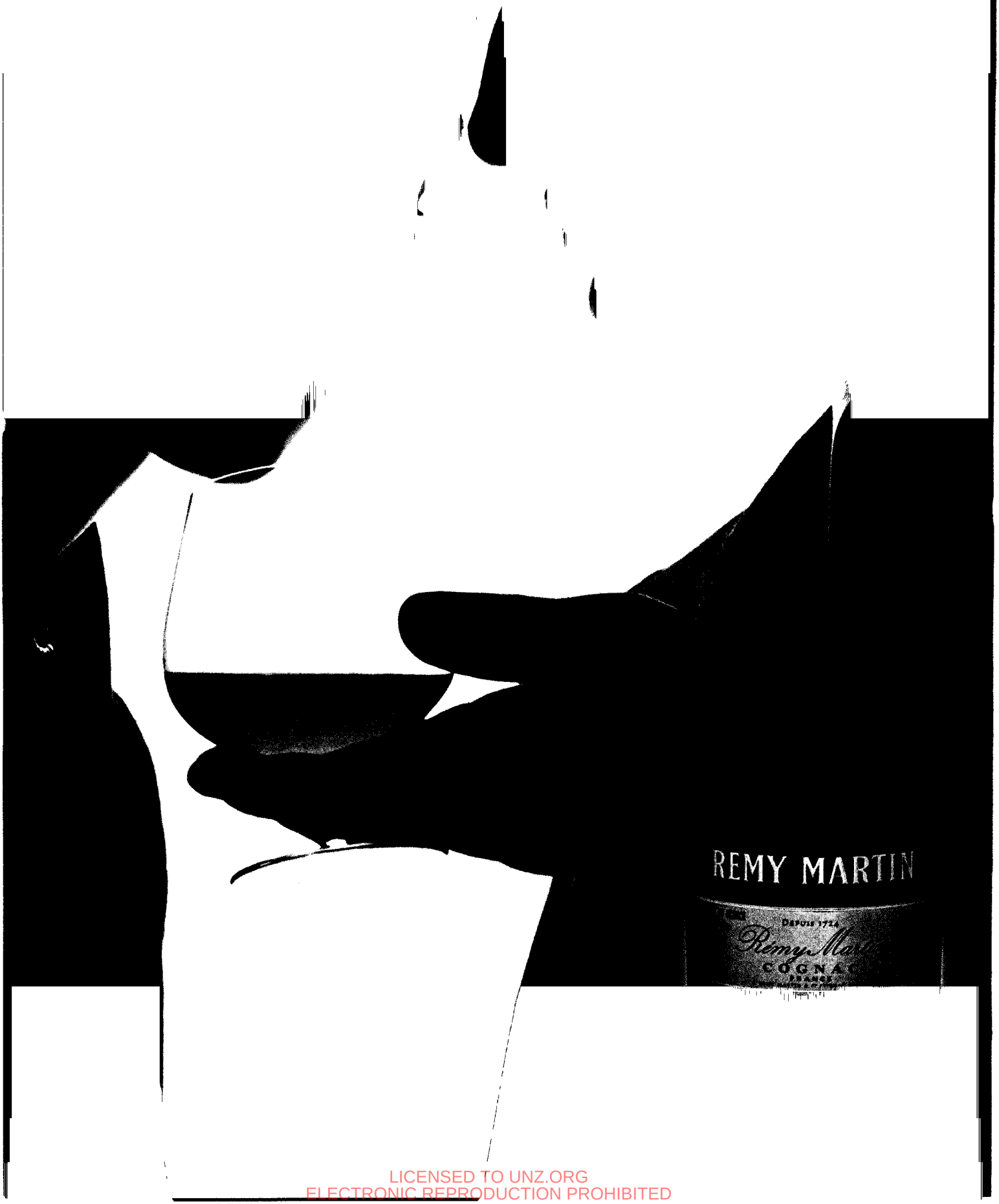

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VOLUME 87 NUMBER TWO *FEBRUARY 1989*

Articles 13 Why the Democrats Lost Again *Joshua Muravchik*

23 Victorian Values/Jewish Values *Gertrude Himmelfarb*

32 Life Under Communism Today *Arch Puddington*

39 The Professor and the L-Word *Midge Decter*

49 Hemingway: Portrait of the Artist as an Intellectual *Paul Johnson*

Story 60 Oral History *Allegra Goodman*

Letters 2 from *Eugene V. Rostow, Paul S. Riebenfeld, Lawrence R. Eno, H.Z. Bornstein, Andrea Levin, Mordechai Nisan, David Basch, Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle, Leonard Fein, Jakob J. Petuchowski, David Novak, Edward Alexander, Robert Conquest*

Books in Review 69 The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace, by Strobe Talbott *Donald Kagan*

74 The Men and Women of Yeshiva, by Jeffrey S. Gurock *Steven Bayme*

76 Inside the National Security Council, by Constantine C. Menges; Perilous Statecraft, by Michael A. Ledeen *David Brock*

78 A Bright and Shining Lie, by Neil Sheehan *George Russell*

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Letters from Readers

Jordan/Palestine

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do not disagree with the practical conclusions of Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle's article, "Is Jordan Palestine?" [October 1988], although I believe Israel and the United States should pursue a more active peace policy than the one they recommend. Even if the American opening to the PLO should produce a significant change in Soviet and Arab policy, it is most unlikely that a peace treaty can be achieved at this time, since the PLO and the Soviet Union have made it clear that they will insist on Israeli withdrawal from the whole of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem, in defiance of the territorial provisions of Resolution 242. This is an outcome Israel and the United States cannot consider. Nevertheless, solid steps toward peace might be achieved by carrying out the approach of the Camp David agreements. As the occupying power, Israel could take such steps unilaterally if no Arab interlocutors are willing to come forward. Actions of this kind, both in Israel's military dispositions and in its arrangements for civil autonomy in parts of the West Bank, could lay the foundations for an eventual peace with Jordan and the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip when the political atmosphere becomes more propitious. Until those parties make peace, however, Israel has no real choice but to stand on its right under Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to continue to govern the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which it occupied in 1967.

Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle devote a considerable part of their article to the question of whether Jordan is Palestine. Strictly speaking, the question they pose has nothing to do with the policy conclusions they reach, except, perhaps, as an excuse for creating an unnecessary and undesirable third Palestinian ministate in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In any event, Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle are in error about the relationship of Transjordan, now called Jordan, to the Palestine Mandate. Transjordan was part of the Mandate not "for a few months" in 1921, as the authors state, but for twenty-five years until 1946, when it became independent and was recognized as a state. During that period, the State Department referred to Transjordan as "the Transjordanian province of the Palestine Mandate." Defense, foreign relations, and other functions were in British hands, and the inhabitants carried British Mandatory passports. Most revealing of all, the Jewish right of settlement under the Mandate in Transjordan was not abolished in 1921, but only suspended.

In 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations, whose substantive resolutions can never be more than recommendations, recommended to the Security Council that the parts of the Mandated territory west of the Jordan River be partitioned between the Arabs and the Jews, with a special regime for Jerusalem. The Arab states rejected that proposal and went to war. The Security Council never acted on the partition resolution directly, but turned its attention to stopping the war and achieving peace on the basis not of the partition plan but of the agreement of Jordan and Israel first to an armistice and ultimately to peace. In 1950, Jordan attempted to annex the West Bank, but its decree of annexation was not widely recognized (and was recently repudiated by King Hussein). In 1967, the Security Council specified standards for the peacemaking process and in 1973 ordered the parties to make peace in accordance with those standards.

The Mandate was terminated as to the territories of Israel and Jordan by the diplomatic recognition of those states; a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel settling their boundaries would have the same effect as to the West Bank.

Thus there is no basis for claiming Jordanian or "Arab" sovereignty in the West Bank. The proposition that Jordan was part of the territory of the Palestine Mandate, and is the Palestinian Arab state intended to divide the remainder of the Mandate territory with Israel, is not an "eccentric" view or simply a matter of partisan politics in Israel. It is an indisputable fact, and a fact, moreover, which has consequences in international law and politics.

It follows that the Arabs who live in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not the only "Palestinians." The Jordanians and the Israelis should be called Palestinians also, because the only conceivable

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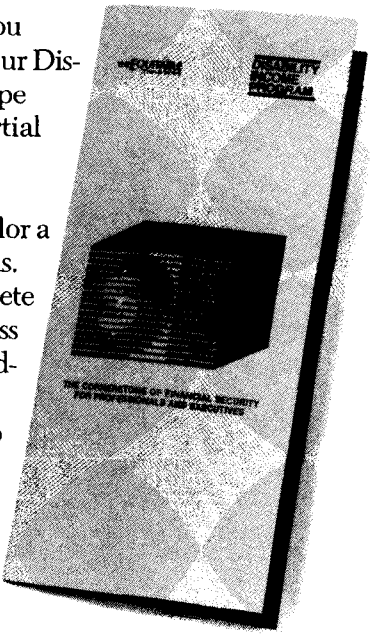

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definition of the word must be drawn from the territorial boundaries of the Mandate. This is the definition the PLO uses, and it is correct. There is no other source for the word.

EUGENE V. ROSTOW
National Defense University
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Is Jordan Palestine?" The answer to the question asked by Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle clearly cannot depend on the political views they or others hold on passing phases of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but must rest on the facts of history and international law. The authors, regrettably, have not done their homework, either on the political or the scholarly aspects of the issue.

The view that Jordan is a Palestinian state in history and law and that there can only be two states in formerly Mandated Palestine, between the Mediterranean and the eastern desert, . . . is held not only by Likud but is shared by practically all Zionist parties in Israel, including the Labor party. The authors are clearly not aware that the leaders of all Zionist factions, with Jabotinsky in the vanguard, have always seen the development of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine within the context of the whole of historic and Mandated Palestine.

"No statesmanlike view of the duty of the Mandatory Power in regard to both Jews and Arabs," wrote Chaim Weizmann in 1930, "could ignore the fact that Transjordan is legally a part of Palestine; . . . that in race, language, and culture its peoples are indistinguishable from the Arabs of western Palestine; . . . that it has been established as an Arab reserve, and that it would be just as easy for landless Arabs or cultivators from congested areas to migrate to Transjordan as to migrate from one part of western Palestine to another." . . .

The acknowledgment of Jordan's true status as a part of Palestine reconverts what is being presented as a . . . conflict between two peoples over one and the same small piece of land . . . into the problem of concluding boundary, human-rights, and peace agreements between two existing nation-states, not that unusual in international affairs.

To those in Israel who favor turning over territory west of the river to Jordan, the argument is of additional interest because it would make it easier to insist on the complete demilitarization of the area they may be willing to surrender, and it would eliminate any political-ideological justification for establishing there a minuscule PLO-dominated irredentist polity with special links to the Soviet Union and brooding over hostile plans against both Jordan and Israel. . . .

If the authors, before they started pontificating on an issue about which they clearly know very little, had troubled to look at the primary source, the "Mandate for Palestine," they would have found that its full title adds, in smaller print, "and Memorandum by the British Government relating to its application to Transjordan, approved by the Council of the League of Nations on September 16, 1922." . . . After spending, say, half an hour reading this document, they would not have had any doubt that Transjordan, when it proclaimed its independence in 1946, . . . was legally—and politically—a part of Palestine. . . . The word "Transjordan" is not to be found in the Mandate, and . . . there never existed a separate "Mandate for Transjordan" or even one for "Palestine and Transjordan," on the lines of the Syrian Mandate, which became the "Mandate for Syria and Lebanon."

Since to the authors considerations of international law, when dealing with a League of Nations Mandate, are "nitpicking," they may perhaps be more willing to pay attention to the course of British policy in Palestine, until it lost control in 1948. British plans for the future of the country, once the concept of ending the Mandate by partition had entered political calculation, were always conceived within the context of the whole area of the Palestine Mandate, including Transjordan. . . .

The same was the case under the various partition proposals adopted by the Palestine subcommittee of the Churchill coalition cabinet during the war. . . . What they all had in common was the inheritance of the Mandate territory by two successor-states, one Jewish and the other Arab, the latter based in Amman. . . .

Even as late as the summer of 1948, . . . the British government . . . vigorously supported the plan presented by United Nations mediator Count Folke Bernadotte. In the Bernadotte plan Transjordan was referred to as part of "Palestine, as defined in the original Mandate entrusted to the United Kingdom in 1922." Appearing before the UN Security Council, Count Bernadotte explained further: ". . . Transjordan is adjacent to Palestine over a long frontier, has common economic interests with Palestine, and was, in fact, included in the original Mandate for Palestine; . . . the Arab peoples of the two countries are homogeneous: . . . the two countries share a common currency; and . . . in general, the two countries have in the past, as now, been closely associated." . . .

When the authors write that a "premise of the Jordan-is-Palestine argument refers to the fact that for a short time in 1920-21, the British government placed Jordan's territory under the titular jurisdiction of the Palestine Mandate," they are not just wrong, they succeed in putting at least three false statements into one very short sentence, and their elaboration is equally faulty. The core of the Jordan-is-Palestine argument is the status of Transjordan as a part of the Palestine Mandate throughout the lifetime of the League of Nations, and as a matter of international law, not of the vagaries of British policy. Nor is it true that the jurisdiction of the Palestine Mandate over Transjordan was ever "titular," although the British government did delegate certain administrative powers to Emir Abdallah, to be exercised in the name of the High Commissioner for Palestine. . . . The only Mandate applicable throughout to Transjordan was the full Palestine Mandate, with only the Jewish National Home and Holy Places clauses "postponed or withheld." . . .

"After March 1921, the East Bank was no longer Palestine," the authors write, as though the appointment in that month of Emir Abdallah—Emir of the Hejaz, not Emir of Transjordan—as "governor" of the area, with St. John Philby as Palestine "district commissioner," had separated it from the area of the Palestine Mandate. It was months after the appointment of Emir Abdallah that the British government introduced the new Article 25 into the draft of the Mandate text; this article defined Transjordan as "the territories lying between the Jordan and the

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eastern boundary of Palestine," a fact that the authors make a point of misstating, out of innocent ignorance. . . .

Mr. Pipes and Mr. Garfinkle are very categorical—and equally wrong—in dismissing the concept of a "historic Palestine." . . . The British Royal [Peel] Commission in 1937 had no hesitation in basing the Palestinian Arab partition state which it recommended on Transjordan, with Amman as its capital, and in defining its area as a part of "historic Palestine," to which the Balfour Declaration originally applied.

Why "historic Palestine"? The authors lack understanding of the dynamics of history when they write, "it is nonsense to speak of 'historic' Palestine as if it were a single longstanding polity," while reminding their readers that "Palestine lived in the hearts of those who loved it." However, not wanting to miss a single debating point, they add that "that was in a realm without clearly defined boundaries." To those who loved it, whether Jews or Christians, millions throughout the centuries, the country had clearly defined dimensions, namely, "Palestine as it had been assigned to the Tribes of Israel," including *Ever Hayarden*, the land of Gilead across the Jordan. It was on the basis of a biblical atlas also that the borders between Syria and Palestine were drawn, east and west of the Jordan River, and that the area north of Haifa was added to the British Mandate. Such were the uses of the Balfour Declaration. As Elizabeth Monroe has written, "1917 was the year that the British climbed onto the shoulders of the Zionists to get a British Palestine."

PAUL S. RIEBENFELD
Jordan-is-Palestine (International)
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In their article, Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle have confused the history of Palestine during and immediately after World War I.

As the authors state, the modern history of Palestine begins with World War I. Palestine lost its separate character at the time of the Jewish dispersion by the Romans and its territories ultimately became anonymous parts of provinces of the Ottoman empire. Only with the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 did Palestine resume a specific role in history.

When the Balfour Declaration was issued, endorsing "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," the land referred to as "Palestine" in that Declaration included what is now Jordan. This was the finding of the Peel Commission in 1937 . . . This was also the testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine in January 1946 of Leopold S. Amery, one of the Secretaries to the British War Cabinet that issued the Declaration. He said that when ". . . the Cabinet decided on the Balfour Declaration they regarded Transjordan [now Jordan] as being within Palestine." . . .

Chaim Weizmann in his memoirs (*Trial and Error*), referring to a meeting that he had under British auspices in 1918 with the Arab leader, Feisal, said, "At this time, it must be remembered, Palestine and Transjordan were one and the same thing . . . ," and he also noted that later, in 1922, the Balfour Declaration was limited "to Palestine west of the Jordan . . . ," i.e., western Palestine.

The authors are therefore in error when they suggest that only starting in July 1920 did Jordan form part of Palestine "at least as far as the British were concerned." . . .

The authors are also inaccurate in their attempt to describe how Jordan, or eastern Palestine, came to be detached from western Palestine.

The Arabs had been ruled for centuries by the Turks throughout the areas now known as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and Saudi Arabia—an area of some 1,280,000 square miles. . . .

The leading Arabs in the Middle East during World War I were the Hashemites, the protectors of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. They lived in the Hejaz, the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, not in what is now Jordan. . . . The British idea was that the Hashemites would rule the large Arab area except for Palestine. Feisal was to rule Syria and his brother Abdallah (the present Hussein's grandfather) was to rule Iraq. But after Feisal had been crowned King of Syria, the French deposed him in July 1920. The British then set him up as King of Iraq. . . . Abdallah had meanwhile come up from the Hejaz to attack the French in reprisal for Feisal's dethronement, and had reached Amman. The British were afraid that Abdallah would cause the French to come down into an area of British interests. They therefore asked Abdallah not to move against the French, and in March 1921 agreed not to apply the Jewish National Home policy to the Palestine territories that lay east of the Jordan but to turn them over to Abdallah to be administered under the Mandate for Palestine. . . .

At the time of this agreement, the British government had already approved the Mandate, had submitted it to the League of Nations on December 6, 1920 for ratification, and had published it as an official document. It called for application of the Jewish National Home policy throughout all of Palestine (eastern and western). The Mandate had not yet been approved by the League when the arrangements with Abdallah were made, so the Mandate was amended to cover them. . . .

The new version consisted principally of the addition of a new Article 25 which provided that "In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled . . ." to postpone or withhold some of the provisions of the Mandate. In practice, the British withheld all of the provisions applicable to the Jewish National Home. Eastern Palestine was renamed Transjordan, but it was administered under the Mandate for Palestine and the High Commissioner for Palestine was also the High Commissioner for Transjordan. . . .

The authors are also in error in stating that these new arrangements "exclud[ed] Jewish immigration there [Jordan]." There was no exclusion of Jews by the Mandate; in fact there were anti-discrimination provisions which forbade the exclusion of Jews. Jews were *legally* entitled to settle in Jordan, but in practice, the British and the Arabs, did exclude all Jews. . . .

The important political fact to note is that Palestine and the area of the Jewish National Home have already been partitioned to the Arabs' gain and the Jews' loss; that the appeasement of Abdallah by the British cut down the area of the Jewish National Home from 45,000 square miles to 10,000 square miles (*including* the West Bank and Gaza), or less than 1 percent of the vast lands marked for Arab independence after World War I. . . .

LAWRENCE R. ENO
New York City

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle . . . confirm that both Israelis and Arabs agree that Jordan is Palestine. Yet they themselves disagree with this view. . . . Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle are entitled to their opinion, of course. But they should then substantiate their conclusions by providing correct legal and historical facts, not out-of-context quotations here and there—and certainly not by presenting falsehoods as facts.

Until the British Mandate, there never was a defined country named "Palestine.". . . The British Mandate for Palestine, as issued by the League of Nations, covered, roughly, what is today Israel and Jordan. While the Emir Abdallah was imposed by the British on eastern Palestine and given local rule for the Transjordanian part of Palestine, the country was ruled by *one* British High Commissioner in Jerusalem (to whom the Emir reported), had *one* currency and *one* central British administration in Jerusalem. I lived there from 1935 to 1947. I know. We had *one* passport for all citizens, east and west of the Jordan. I still have my Palestinian passport and I am sure it is no rarity.

Those Israelis who now speak of "transfer" (not "tranference") base their view on the legal fact that such an act would be a de-facto transfer of population from one part of Palestine to another. We may or may not agree with their recommendations, but the legal basis for their view is there, including worldwide precedents (East to West Germany, India/Pakistan, North to South Korea, etc.). There are two successor states to the Mandate of Palestine. One Jewish Palestinian state named Israel in cis-Jordan and one Arab Palestinian state now named Jordan in trans-Jordan. The former occupies about 23 percent and the latter about 77 percent of the original Palestine Mandate.

King Hussein is a Hashemite. That does not, however, prevent him from being a Palestinian. He was born in 1935 in Amman, *Palestine*! King Haakon of Norway was a Danish prince. That did not prevent him from being the King of Norway. This situation is not unusual in history; there are many precedents. . . .

To say that Jordanians are not Palestinians is not correct. . . . The population of today's Jordan is made up of people from the Palestine Mandate and their descendants, some of cis-Jordanian origin, some of trans-Jordanian origin, and some of Hashemite origin. . . .

In his most recent proclamation, King Hussein simply flipflopped for expediency's sake. . . . But this does not change the historical and legal facts, it only changes his approach. Whether we like it or not, Jordan is Palestine. To state the opposite is disinformation.

H.Z. BORNSTEIN
Jordan *Is* Palestine Committee
(New York)
New Hyde Park, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Is Jordan Palestine?" Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle state correctly that CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) has run ads in national publications arguing the position that historically and demographically Jordan is Palestine. However, they characterize CAMERA implicitly as an organization whose *raison d'être* is the promotion of this concept as well as, presumably, the advocacy of particular related policies by the Israeli and American governments. For the record, it should be understood that CAMERA is a media-watch and informational-resource organization. It is an apolitical group that does not advocate policy in any of its activities. . . .

CAMERA ads address a variety of Middle East topics, including the nature of the region's Arab states. Prominent among the organization's concerns is the stunning underreporting of repression inside these countries. With the expulsion of NBC news correspondent Rick Davis from Jordan in April for reporting on internal upheaval and on aspects of the country's political system, history, and economy, not a single full-time American television reporter remains in the entire Arab world.

As to substance, the article . . . strikingly underplays the issue of the demographic makeup of Jordan and its implications. Unremarked, for instance, was the restiveness this past spring and summer among the large majority of the population who are Palestinians and who threatened to rise against their king in tandem with the uprising in the West Bank against the Israelis. Although reports on these popular demonstrations were suppressed by the Jordanian government, enough of the story eluded censorship to suggest the deep kinship felt by the Palestinians in Jordan with those in the administered territories. The kinship, it would seem, extends to a wish to be free of respective overlords. On this point also the authors may have inadvertently attributed a policy aim to CAMERA. They speak of adherents of the Palestine/Jordan viewpoint as seeking the overthrow of King Hussein. Such is emphatically not the case with our organization.

"Common sense," as the CAMERA ad puts it, suggests that a country comprised of a large majority of citizens who are Palestinian Arabs living in territory constituting more than 70 percent of Mandatory Palestine *is* Palestine. Arguments based rather arcanely on the declining rapidity of the Jordan River or even on the varying divisions of ancient Palestine by Roman, Mamluk, or Ottoman rulers seem less germane than the imperatives of demography and the history of this century.

Any prospective solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict—whether conceived of in terms of a redivision of the West Bank or autonomy arrangements or shared sovereignty or some other formula—must take account of the facts: that there is a Palestinian majority in Jordan, that the Palestinians on each side of the Jordan River regard their brethren on the other bank as co-nationalists, and that these sentiments have a dynamic political force which must be considered if a prospective peace is to be founded on arrangements that have any chance of enduring.

ANDREA LEVIN
Boston CAMERA
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Is Jordan Palestine?" Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle quote me as believing that the lands east and west of the Jordan River are part of a single country which has existed throughout history. By implication, people who relocate from east to west or vice versa remain in the same land; they are migrants, not immigrants. . . . This "crystal brook," as pilgrim Mark Twain called the Jordan River, is not a barrier at all. . . .

I have written extensively on the Jordan-is-Palestine thesis in an effort to demonstrate that modern population movements and profound socioeconomic changes

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point toward the Hashemite kingdom as a Palestinian-Arab entity. . . . This development coincided with early British colonial policy and hopes in Palestine and served the interests of both Israel and Jordan. People make history in spite of geography: more than half-a-million Arabs from the western side have settled in Transjordan to the east since 1948. . . .

The crux of the Pipes/Garfinkle analysis, in itself an interesting review of the materials, is the political question of rule and people on both sides of the Jordan River. The authors raise the issue of "transferring the Arab population of western Palestine to the eastern part" (even they admit these areas are part of a whole) to warn that the . . . costs of this action "would be staggeringly high." So while Bulgaria expels Muslims and Rumania drives out Hungarians—not to speak of all the other massive population transfers in this century—. . . a sober discussion of this hard problem would seem to be called for. Instead, the authors issue a proclamation of war against Israel for which, I guess, it hardly matters if Jordan is or is not Palestine.

Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle advocate a rethinking of positions for all relevant actors in the Middle East—all except the Israeli Right, that is. And Israeli voters did indeed rethink their position: on November 1 there was a further move to the Right in the national electorate. It is the Israelis who have had to pay the costs of Arab violence, which have been "staggeringly high" already. The murder, the burning alive of women and children, the mutilation of the dead, the burning of property, the trepidation wrapped in gloom the Israelis are experiencing in their own country—all this and more is a cost that elicited "major rethinking" among certain Israelis whom the authors would seemingly deny the right (let alone the moral obligation) to think, or rethink, or to act. It is these people who have had a surfeit of folly in waiting "for a change of course from the Arabs"—which Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle believe people "should plead for." Studying history as a means to life, Israeli voters on November 1 . . . answered the question of whether Jordan is Palestine . . . by saying that *Israel is Jewish.*

MORDECHAI NISAN
Hebrew University
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Is Jordan Palestine?" appears to be another of those attempts to shoot Israel in the foot. The entire land mass of present Israel and Jordan was part of the original British Mandate. That is the portion of land that must be divided between Jews and Arabs. . . .

So why are Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle interested in limiting Israel's capacity to deal with the Arab population bomb? It appears that they are not interested in Israel's problems but in what they see as the problem of preserving Jordan as an Arab state friendly to the West. . . .

Israel is facing a demographic time bomb within all its boundaries. The exceedingly fruitful Arabs are a threat both inside the green line and in the territories. These Arabs demand a Palestinian state, an aspiration cultivated by Jordan and the other Arab nations. Let these countries now satisfy this aspiration through Jordan or defuse it by dispersing this population when it gets to Jordan. It is sufficient that Israel take responsibility for ensuring its own existence. Messrs. Pipes and Garfinkle think an unfriendly Palestinian Jordan would be a great threat to Israel, greater than the internal threat of a major hostile Arab population in its bosom. That would not be my judgment and I hope not the sane judgment of Israel. . . .

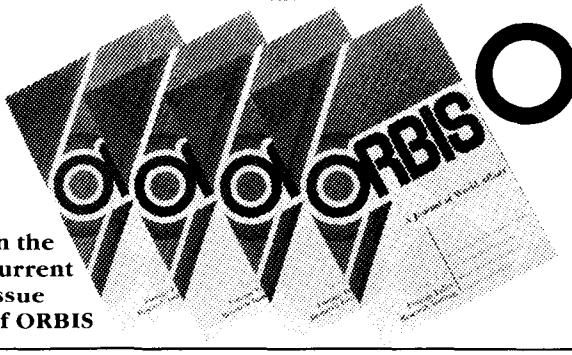
DAVID BASCH
West Hartford, Connecticut

DANIEL PIPES and ADAM GARFINKLE write:

The letter-writers object to two matters: our argument that Israelis should not try to direct Palestinian nationalism toward Jordan, and our view of the extent and duration of the British Mandate for Palestine. Let us begin with the first, more contentious, issue.

We hold that attempts to deal with Palestinian nationalism by redirecting it to Jordan—especially if this involves the "transfer" of Arabs there—are counterproductive to Israel's security and well-being, and to U.S. interests in the region. Our critics disagree. They argue that Palestinians in "western Palestine" who want to live in a Palestinian state should go to Jordan. This is nonsense, for Palestinians do not think of the East Bank as their homeland.

On the delicate matter of "trans-



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fer," David Basch argues that moving the Arabs east of the Jordan River is a way for Israel "to deal with the Arab population bomb," and he asks why we would limit Israel's capacity to cope with this problem. Our article explained that very clearly: because the practical costs of his solution far outweigh any conceivable benefits. We listed both costs and benefits on page 41 and we see no reason to repeat the list here. If Mr. Basch disagrees with these points, he should refute them, not attack our motives.

Mr. Basch accuses us of shooting Israel in the foot and of not being "interested in" the country's problems. He is insulting on the first point and wrong on the second. Mordechai Nisan goes much farther, accusing us of having issued "a proclamation of war against Israel." This is a bizarre interpretation, for our article contains not a single word antagonistic to Israel.

This brings us to the second category of complaints. The key difference between our view and that of our critics has to do with the importance of fine legal points. We respect the law enormously but remember that international law is not the same as domestic law and never can be. Nor can law displace politics. When we date the attachment of what became Transjordan to the Mandate in 1920 and its detachment in 1921, we are not making a legal argument. Rather, we are looking at the shifting circumstances that followed the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the end of World War I. And we stand by that argument.

On the issue of the attachment of Transjordan to Palestine: it may be, as Lawrence R. Eno says, that many British officials in 1917-18 saw Palestine as including the eastern side of the river, but the Balfour Declaration had no map attached to it and specified no borders. Further, the Declaration was issued in November 1917, at a time when the British did not control the territory in question. By the time British forces actually did control the Levant, one year later, political circumstances had changed so dramatically that the territorial musings surrounding the Balfour Declaration ceased to have much meaning.

Similarly, Mr. Eno and others should note that although the detachment of Transjordan from Palestine was not a formal matter—we mention some of this in our note on page 37—it was nonetheless thorough and permanent. When the East Bank was made off-limits to Jewish settlement (whether by suspension or prohibition, legal or illegal, is quite beside the point), its fundamental relation to the Zionist enterprise was irrevocably altered. And with the exception of the Revisionists, the Zionist leaders at the time understood and, however reluctantly, accepted this as a necessary compromise. Indeed, Mr. Eno quotes Chaim Weizmann in 1922 noting that the Balfour Declaration was limited "to Palestine west of the Jordan." That makes our point rather well.

While accepting most of Paul S. Riebenfeld's assertions, we dispute their relevance. Our article dismissed the sorts of points he raises as "nitpicking," and his letter only confirms this assessment. How can anyone think that these minor points matter more than the deep tapestry of historical reality? Mr. Riebenfeld suggests we reread the Mandate for Palestine; we urge him to catch up with seven decades of passion and war. He reminds us of those who say the United Nations created the state of Israel. This is false; the sweat, sacrifice, and love of Jewish pioneers created Israel. The UN only legitimated that state in the eyes of others.

Andrea Levin tells us that because "a large majority" of the Jordanian population is Palestinian, that land has become Palestine. Ignore her exaggerated demography, but think what this principle means for world politics: the northwest of Pakistan becomes Afghanistan, the southern Sudan becomes Ethiopia, and Miami certainly becomes Cuba. As for H.Z. Bornstein's point that Arabs who live on the East Bank are all Palestinians—including King Hussein—because the East Bank is technically Palestine, this is a wonderful example of legal pedantry. Our response takes the form of a question: how exactly does Mr. Bornstein suggest imposing the Palestinian nationality on the king?

Let us assume for a moment that Eugene V. Rostow is correct in saying that there is no legal basis for claiming Jordanian or Arab sovereignty over the West Bank. But what about the almost one million Arabs who live on the West Bank who think they are entitled to sovereignty? Does he imagine they will change their minds because of unilateral decisions taken in London many decades ago? When Mr. Rostow holds that Israelis "should be called Palestinians also, because the only conceivable definition of the word must be drawn from the territorial boundaries of the Mandate," we again point to the irrelevance of the argument. National definitions are acts of collective existential consciousness; there are Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians today, and all three know who they are and who the other two groups are. If everyone did as Mr. Rostow does, and called Israelis "Palestinians," you can be sure the Palestinian Arabs would quickly find another name for themselves.

Our critics insist that Israelis are Palestinians; that King Hussein is really a Palestinian; and that those who say they are Palestinians are really Jordanians. How convenient! They insist that Jordan is the real apple of the Palestinian eye, when it plainly is not. In these and other ways, they deny reality in pursuit of their dream for Israel. We share their dream of a safe Israel, but we suggest pursuing it by dealing with facts, rather than by dredging up the legalisms of a vanished age.

Israel & American Jews

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the course of his rampaging review-essay on my book, *Where Are We? The Inner Life of America's Jews*, Edward Alexander describes the phrase "caring people" as "a repellent expression which means exactly nothing" ["Where Is Zion?," September 1988]. Whether or not it means anything and whether what it means is repellent, it is a sign of Mr. Alexander's own carelessness that he charges me with "repeated" use of the term when, in fact, the word "caring" occurs exactly four times in the course of 313 pages of text (ah, the comforts of a good word-processing program!). Technically, I suppose that qualifies as a "repeated" use, but since Mr. Alexander contends that the kinds of people whom I identify as "caring" are "do-gooders who think they are doing good when they feel good about what they are doing," it is well to compare my use of the term with his dismissal of it. One example will suffice: On page 203, in an effort to locate the place of Halakhah, the corpus of Jewish law, in Jewish life, I observe that

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we must point to the actual ways in which many Jews over these last several centuries have chosen to live—and I mean here caring, committed Jews, I mean here David Ben-Gurion and Louis Brandeis, I mean Albert Einstein and Janusz Korczak and Nello Rosselli and several millions of other decidedly non-halakhic Jews. If what they have done with their lives is taken, as it should be, as an affirmation of Judaism's deepest convictions, then Halakhah must be seen as only one of an array of Judaic methods.

Were this an isolated example, perhaps it would not warrant comment. But Mr. Alexander's effort to squeeze my arguments into his preconceived categories even at the cost of elementary accuracy is so persistent that "carelessness" hardly covers it. "Distortion" comes a good deal closer, and even that may not come quite close enough.

So, for example, in order to prove that I endorse a kind of Judaism that is in fact "a mode of egress from Judaism," he asserts that when I cite Isaiah 58 on "clothing the naked" and "feeding the hungry," I omit the Prophet's injunction "not to ignore your own kin." But there the injunction is, on page 219, entirely legible, in type and with plain intention no smaller than the rest of the passage.

Again, in order to prove that I am Israel's enemy, he has me say that it is "now plain" that the Israelis "have come to hunt, have even perhaps become hunters." But the context of his citation belies his use of it. Here is what I actually say: "Is it not by now plain that the [Israelis] in fact have faltered, have come to hunt, have even, perhaps, become hunters? To a new generation, not insulated by memory, that may be the way it appears. The rest of us still remember what we were taught and what we saw."

Or again, in order to prove that I am a "dishonest rascal," Mr. Alexander asserts that I "boast" and "write with pride" of the Mark Rudds and the Abbie Hoffmans of American Jewry. But the context in which their names are mentioned is entirely descriptive, by no stretch of the imagination an endorsement, as any fair reading of the relevant pages will show.

Perhaps because the book itself does not provide adequate grist for Mr. Alexander's malicious mill, he drags into "evidence" a recent debate between Milton Himmelfarb and me, in which he has me saying that Jews should not vote "just on the basis of narrow interests." I have the text of my talk on that occasion in front of me. I cannot find anything close to what Mr. Alexander claims to quote. I find, instead, a sentence that reads that "Jewish values and Jewish interests cannot be disentangled." And, later, "if you want to have a serious conversation about Jewish interests, you cannot exclude Judaism from that conversation. The Jewish imagination is as much a part of the Jewish reality as the Jewish belly is. And Judaism is the name we give our organized imagination."

And so forth. Perhaps because I write these words from Israel (my second visit since the *intifada* began), that Israel which Mr. Alexander implies I do not visit and whose claims he asserts I reject, I am especially offended by his caricature of my relationship to the Jewish state. He lumps me together with those so "deeply immersed in considering the special Jewish mission to Gentile America" that they "can hardly be expected" to express interest in "the concerns of the earthly Jerusalem." But as Mr. Alexander knows quite well—after all, he calls me "a veteran fomenter-from-within of American Jewish agitation against Israel's government"—I devote a considerable portion of my time, both personal and professional, to precisely those concerns. His problem, of course, is that he disagrees with my assessment of how the earthly Jerusalem shall best be protected and defended. That, I presume, is why his diatribe focuses so heavily on the two-and-a-half chapters (out of fourteen) of my book that deal explicitly with Israel. Yet in his article, he prefers to bypass the substantive differences between us in favor of sarcastic misrepresentation. Here, from the penultimate chapter of my book, is a hint of those differences:

> [I]t is now clear that Israel is a nation that makes its fair share of mistakes, that has its fair share of rogues. America's Jews are just now beginning to adjust to this new understanding, and it is not an easy adjustment. We have to learn how to defend Israel without apology—without apologizing for Israel's blunders, without apologizing for the fact of our defense. We have to learn how to sustain our attachment despite our disappointments. We have to learn how to prevent our disappointments from unbalancing our appraisal of the earthly Jerusalem, where flowers still bloom, where good men and women daily do battle for justice and sometimes win. . . . Most of all, we have to learn, together with the Israelis, how to understand Israel as the joint endeavor of the Jewish people. There is a place to stand between the impossible dream and the rude awakening, and we—and the Israelis—have to find that place, and stand there.

So much for my "elaborate disentangling" of myself "from the claims of Zionism." So much, as well, for serious debate, and also truth.

LEONARD FEIN

Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I certainly hold no brief for the leftist causes espoused by Leonard Fein and routinely endorsed by resolutions of the Reform rabbinate and the (Reform) Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Edward Alexander does seem to make life too easy for himself when he states that classical Reform Judaism's doctrine of the "Mission of Israel" has been "exploded a thousand times over." To prove this, he quotes . . . Hillel Halkin's assertion that "prior to the time of [Moses] Mendelssohn" one would not find "*anywhere* [*sic*] the concept of a Jewish mission to help bring about . . . a state of universal social justice." Indeed, Halkin feels that "nothing in fact could be further from the traditional Jewish mentality." . . .

Evidently Halkin and, following him, Mr. Alexander chose to ignore such passages as Isaiah 2:2-4, where a worldwide submission to God's Torah is clearly indicated as a future goal, and passages like the "Servant of the Lord" poems in Deutero-Isaiah, which do stress the role of the Israelite people as "a light unto the nations." . . .

What Mr. Alexander *can* legitimately argue is that there were many centuries during which the doctrine of the Mission of Israel did not occupy a prominent place at the top of the Jewish agenda. . . . Quite understandably, what Jews found to be beyond their power to achieve in the "here and now" was relegated to eschatological consummation. . . .

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But Mr. Alexander ought to realize that there were other ideas that occur even less frequently in premodern Jewish literature than the Mission of Israel. For example, the notion that the Jews should be "a nation like all the other nations" (apart from a *rejection* of that notion in the First Book of Samuel); that there can be a "Jewish people" apart from those who practice the Jewish religion; and that such a religiously neutral "Jewish people" should create its own secular Jewish state in the Promised Land. The view expressed by Saadya Gaon—that "our people is a people only by virtue of its Torah"—was a view generally shared by Jews prior to the rise of 19th-century Zionism. . . .

An objective student of Jewish life and thought would simply have to admit that, with the emancipation of the Jews in the West, the nature of Jewish life changed so radically that modern Jewish thinkers found it possible to enunciate ideas which, in previous ages, had existed in germinal form only, like the Mission of Israel, or not at all, like secular Jewish nationalism. . . .

Zionism and Reform Judaism (with its Mission of Israel doctrine) are *both* children of the 19th century. That neither concept made its appearance earlier is a fact, as is the selectivity with which advocates of both ideas ransack the sources of premodern traditional Judaism to find appropriate "prooftexts." If, in the light of present-day realities, it is argued that one "has been exploded a thousand times over," then it would have to be admitted that the other one has, too. A more charitable view would grant *both* more time to prove themselves.

Jakob J. Petuchowski
Hebrew Union College-Jewish
Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was heartened by Edward Alexander's accurate description of my position concerning the positive role traditional Jews can and should play in American moral discourse. However, I was disturbed by his criticism of my position in his polemic against any Jewish moral concern with any society other than the state of Israel. His thesis is, of course, the latest version of the old Zionist dogma of *shelilat hagolah*—the negation, or perhaps "evaporation," of the Diaspora. In his view, it would seem that all Jews should live in the state of Israel, or be preparing to do so, or, at the least, should be doing nothing other than supporting it.

Aside from the sociological fact that the majority of world Jewry has rejected this dogma (in practice if not in theory), I find it wanting on halakhic, theological, and moral grounds. Halakhically, a number of the most important legal authorities see no violation of Jewish law by those Jews who have chosen to remain in the Diaspora and can justify that choice by living a life of authentic Jewish piety. This does not, moreover, lead them to denigrate the importance of the Land of Israel and the need for it to have a Jewish population. Theologically, if Diaspora Jews are concerned only with the state of Israel, then they are effectively declaring to the Gentiles among whom they live and work that the Torah of the Lord is concerned with nothing else. That is a defamation of God Himself . . . And, morally, if concern with the state of Israel is the supreme Jewish concern, then it would seem that there is no higher criterion upon which to base constructive criticism about any action of this human institution. Twentieth-century Jews, more than anyone else, should be wary of promoting nationalism as an absolute above all criticism. . . .

[Rabbi] David Novak
Baruch College-CUNY
New York City

Edward Alexander writes:

"Caring people" and "people who care" are meaningless expressions unless they are followed by a phrase beginning with the little word *for*. There are no people who "care" in the abstract. The expression is repellent because, as the critic Robert Heilman has remarked, it is typically used by people who want to give themselves the warm inner glow of civic virtue without saying what they mean. Thus Leonard Fein adduces as an example of "what real caring is about" the declarations by professed lovers of Israel that they "are often troubled by the policies of the current Israeli government." Just what is it, one wants to know, that these people "care" *for*?

I never said that Mr. Fein "omits" Isaiah's injunction against ignoring your own kin when he quotes Isaiah 58. I did say that he "emphasizes only [its] socially visionary lines." The problem is not that he misquotes the passage from Isaiah but that he misreads it. He has two extended references to the passage. On pages 219-20 he quotes it to buttress his preference for the "political activism" of prophetic Judaism over the quietism of the rabbis, and he singles out from it "the religious injunction to heed the needs of the stranger." In his introduction, Mr. Fein offers an explication of the chapter which stresses loosing the fetters of wickedness, letting the oppressed go free, breaking every yoke, dealing bread to the hungry, bringing the poor into your house—and says not one word about the obligation to attend to your own kin. In other words, Isaiah 58 is for Mr. Fein exclusively an exhortation to the telescopic philanthropy he adores.

The continuing saga of Israel's struggle to live up to Mr. Fein's severe standards for the use of Jewish force does not end with the "hunting" passage quoted in his letter. In the next paragraph he cites Golda Meir's famous remark that she could forgive the Arabs their killing but not their having forced Jews into killing; and he adds that although he had thought her sincere when she said it, and still believed in Israel's moral superiority to the hunting Arabs when he visited the country in 1967, twenty years of "occupation" have changed his mind. "Golda Meir's sentimentalism notwithstanding," he now wonders whether even in 1967 he was justified in seeing the Arabs as the hunters. In his note amplifying this discussion he reports that "a very substantial literature" now questions whether Israel was forced into *any* of its wars. (The only example of this "literature" he mentions is a scandalous book by Simha Flapan.) Mr. Fein's view of who is responsible for the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict may also be found in the Summer 1988 issue of *Reform Judaism*, where he states that "very many Israelis," i.e., the majority who oppose abandonment of the territories, "do not want peace."

The "context" of Mr. Fein's roll-call of "Jewish" radicals is his claim that the Jewish people "has for 3,200 years . . . been committed to building the kingdom of heaven here on earth," and that "lofty utopian ambitions" are the quintessential expression of Jewish love of mankind. Since most of the Jew-

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ish all-stars on Mr. Fein's roster turned out to be more adept at building hell on earth, and since Mr. Fein considers utopian leftism a genuine expression of Judaism rather than a form of egress from it, he might have indicated how false messianism has often plagued the Jews and how utopianism, in its insistence on perfection, often turns into hatred of mankind.

The objection to Jewish voting "just on the basis of narrow interests" was attributed to Mr. Fein by the Jerusalem *Post* in its March 24, 1988 account of the debate between him and Milton Himmelfarb. I hope the *Post* was also wrong in quoting him as deploring the "degree to which the energies and attentions of Jewish agencies and organizations are so invested in matters relating to Israel," a sentiment perfectly consonant with the argument of his book.

One can hardly be unaware that Mr. Fein has visited Israel when the publicity for his book blares that he has done so, "for periods ranging from nine months to three days, forty times." Each time he returns with fresh evidence of what he calls the "ordinariness" of the earthly Jerusalem, fresh fuel for his doctrine that Jerusalem is as much exile as Boston, and obsession with Israel the major impediment to American Jewry's reascent to "Sinai." American Jews, he laments, cannot accept or understand this ordinariness. What Mr. Fein, despite his forty visits, cannot understand is that, as Martin Buber wrote: "Zion is the prophetic image of a promise to mankind; but it would be a poor metaphor if Mount Zion did not actually exist. This land is called 'holy'; but it is not the holiness of an idea, it is the holiness of a piece of earth. That which is merely an idea and nothing more cannot become holy."

Mr. Fein's rhapsodic description of himself and his constituents as involved in a "joint endeavor" with Israelis does nothing to erase the fact that while the characteristic contribution of the "ordinary" Israeli to this joint endeavor is paying the world's highest taxes, serving thirty-seven years in the army, and living with a burden of constant peril, the characteristic contribution of Leonard Fein has been organizing newspaper advertisements condemning Israeli policies, advocating (in 1982) a boycott of travel to Judea and Samaria, and writing a book warning American Jews that their defense of Israel has reduced "a religious civilization to a political action committee." A fine, equitable scheme for the division of labor!

It is impossible not to benefit from the measured criticism of so fine a scholar as Jakob J. Petuchowski; and since he does not argue very aggressively for the ancient provenance of Reform Judaism's mission theology, I will reciprocate by not pressing too hard the implications of the fact that the passages he cites from Isaiah assume that it is only *as a nation* that Israelites can be "a light unto the nations." It is true that, as he states, both Zionism and the Mission of Israel theology are products of the 19th century. But since Zionism did not, as a rule, claim biblical authorization, it cannot be "exploded" by demonstrating that secular Jewish nationalism finds no basis in Torah. If both are myths, the question becomes not which is demonstrable as fact, but which has created attitudes and engendered actions that have sustained and will perpetuate Jewish life.

I grant that even the best doctrines have little defense against the uses to which they are put. But is there not something about the idea of Israel as "a light unto the nations" that lends itself too readily to the political exploitation of a Leonard Fein or the high-minded blindness of a David Novak?

I did not, of course, argue (as Rabbi Novak alleges) against "any Jewish moral concern with any society other than the state of Israel." What I did say was that, at the present time, this incessant nattering about Jewish "values" and the Jewish "mission" to the Gentiles is faintly suspect because it cannot help drawing Jews away from support of Israel. The present time, in case Rabbi Novak has not noticed, is one in which Israel is besieged by arsonists, religious fanatics, bomb-throwers, and slanderers—all bent on the common aim of annihilation—while American Jews are assailed by artful propagandists who encourage moral discrimination against Israel based precisely on the doctrine that Israel's survival is contingent on its being a light to the nations. Rabbi Novak deplores an immoderate devotion by American Jews to Israel's survival and to its right to be treated as an equal among the nations as idolatrous nationalism. A rabbi who writes thus can hardly have given much thought to what the post-Holocaust religious life of American Jews would be without the state of Israel. Rabbi Novak's zeal to light the way for the Gentiles reminds one of the blind man who can direct others on their way, but cannot walk straight himself.

Stalin's Terror

To the Editor of Commentary:

J. Arch Getty should not be allowed, even to the extent that he had done so in a letter, to evade Walter Laqueur's characterization of him ["An Exchange on Glasnost," Letters from Readers, November 1988, commenting on Walter Laqueur's article, "Glasnost & Its Limits," July 1988]. He quotes himself admitting, even deploring, the Stalin terror of the 1930's: to fail to have done so would have been to be laughed out of court. But he omits his summary: "In the period of this study, many thousands of innocent people were arrested, imprisoned, and sent to labor camps. Thousands were executed." This is like saying that Hitler, much to his discredit, killed "thousands" of Jews. Such numbers (and the "tens of thousands" long ago presented by Jerry Hough and never yet, as far as I know, apologized for) would fit into one corner of the recently excavated mass graves at Kuropaty alone—one of a number serving a minor Soviet republic.

Robert Conquest
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

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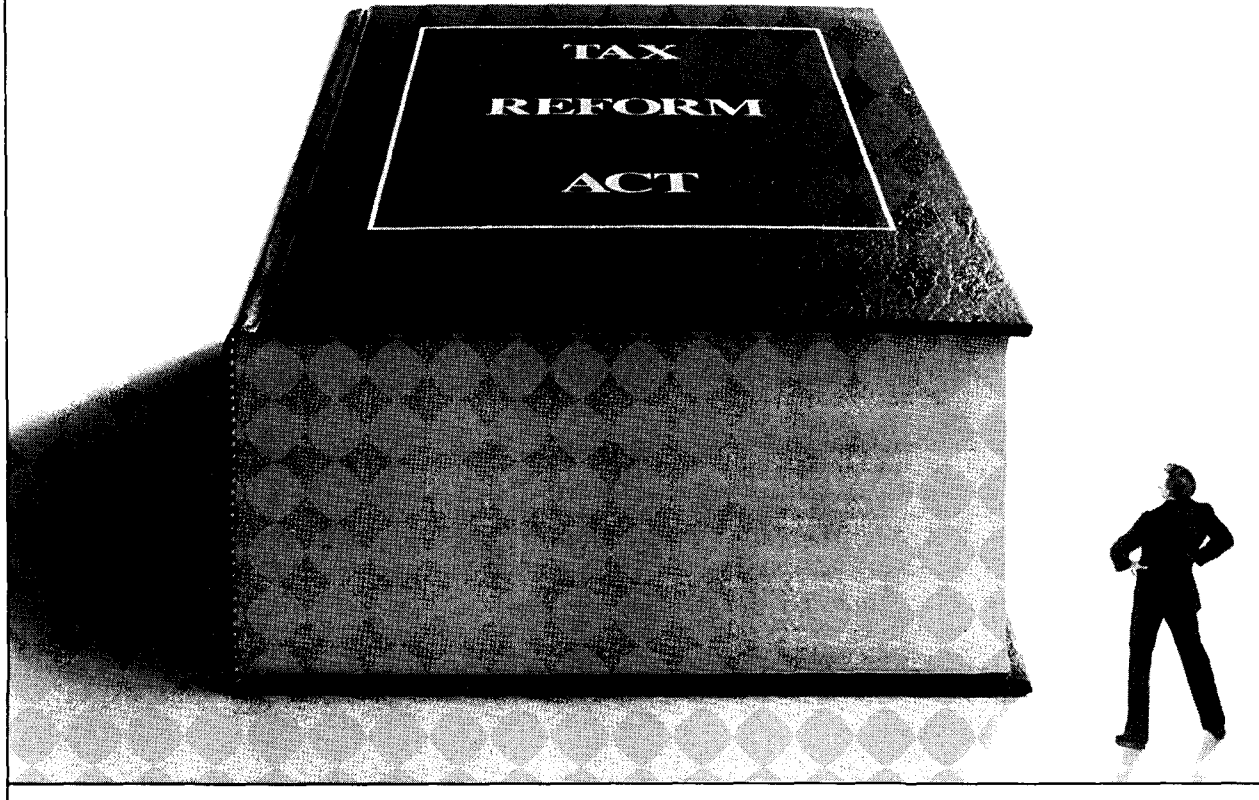

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Why the Democrats Lost Again

Joshua Muravchik

In the weeks before election day, as George Bush's victory over Michael Dukakis grew more certain, it seemed likely that this defeat would finally be the one to persuade the Democrats to examine their ways. The loss would be the Democratic party's fifth in the last six presidential elections, and once again the margin would not even be close. This, moreover, would be a loss to a Republican candidate who had been widely derided, and whose negative ratings early in the presidential year were unusually high (more than 40 percent in some surveys).

During the presidential primaries, commented *Newsweek*, "Democrats said nightly prayers for [Bush's] success" because he "seemed a beguilingly easy target." Not only had those prayers been answered, but the "target" became still easier to hit after Bush selected a running mate who, according to all polls, was a liability to his ticket. Even on the day after their defeat, the Democrats' estimate of Bush seemed not to have risen by much. A Democratic pollster, Harrison Hickman, was quoted as saying: "If we couldn't beat Bush, I don't know who we *can* beat." And the Texas Democratic leader, Jim Hightower, agreed: "By God, it's awful we could not beat George Bush and Dan Quayle. They were perfect for us."

Nevertheless, in the months since the Democrats lost the election by the hefty margin of 54 to 46, precious few of them have drawn the lesson that the party needs to alter what it is offering to the electorate if it hopes to win the White House in the foreseeable future. Instead, a rich though often disharmonious chorus has burst forth with a medley of rationalizations, all aiming to explain away defeat.

In retrospect, say some Democrats, theirs was a hopeless task, to run against peace and prosperity. Not that they give much credit for peace and prosperity to the policies of the outgoing administration. To hear many Democrats tell it, the Republicans were infuriatingly lucky to have been in the White House just when peace and prosperity descended by coincidence upon the land. Others argue that the peace and prosperity so beneficial to Bush's campaign were in fact illusory commodities. As Lloyd Bentsen put it in the vice-presidential debate: "If you let me write two hundred billion dollars' worth of hot checks every year, I could give you an illusion of prosperity, too."

The trouble with this argument is that eight years ago, before Reaganomics was tried, neither Lloyd Bentsen nor any other Democrat had come forward to tell the voters that they could have both low inflation and low unemployment, as well as sustained and healthy levels of growth, if they were willing to tolerate higher deficits. On the contrary, the typical Democratic attitude (as expressed in a *New Republic* editorial published the week after Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory) was this:

> We fear that Reagan's apparent agenda of 10-percent tax cuts, 9-percent defense increases, and 2-percent federal budget cuts will result instead in superheated inflation of a kind that . . . may cause Reagan to resort to wage and price controls.

But whether it was reality or illusion, the country, as the *New Republic*'s Hendrik Hertzberg pointed out, was no less prosperous or less at peace back in July when Dukakis *led* Bush by 17 points in the polls than on election day.

A second theme was that the election had turned not on substantive issues but on tactics and technique. As the liberal activist Mark Green put it: "Baker-Ailes beat Sasso-Estrich in a war of tactics, handlers, ads, and sound-bites." Maybe; but as it happens, the single most important tactical decision of the campaign was the choice of running mates, and on this one the Democrats won by a mile.

Others did not credit the Republicans' tactics so much as lament the Democrats'. The election analyst Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute called Dukakis's effort "the worst campaign I have ever seen." Democratic Senator Terry Sanford (North Carolina) went further, saying, "The Democratic effort has been the worst-managed campaign in this century."

These lamentations create a sense of *déjà vu*.

Joshua Muravchik, who contributed "Why the Democrats Lost" to our January 1985 issue, is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of *The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights Policy*. Mr. Muravchik wishes to thank Jeffrey Gedmin for research assistance in the preparation of this article.

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Democrats had earlier said the same things about the Mondale (1984), Carter (1980), and McGovern (1972) campaigns. Nor do such alibis explain how, if Dukakis was such a poor campaigner, he had managed to secure the presidential nomination by handily beating all the other Democratic aspirants. In fact, throughout most of 1988 the impression Dukakis and his team made was one of tactical mastery. Here is E.J. Dionne, Jr., the New York *Times*'s campaign correspondent, writing at the time of the Democratic convention:

> No one who has watched Mr. Dukakis this year, as he transformed himself from one of the Democratic "seven dwarfs" into the midsummer favorite for the White House, will doubt his strategic and tactical sense or that of his advisers, headed by the formidable Susan Estrich. . . .

Still another post-election refrain suggested that the Democrats had not really lost at all, or had *hardly* lost. Thus, Michael Kinsley of the *New Republic* referred to "Michael Dukakis's very respectable 46 percent to 54 percent finish" as "a loss this close." This, of a margin not far short of the ten percentage points which according to *Newsweek* constitute the traditional definition of a landslide. (Exit polls showed that Senator Quayle's unpopularity had cost Bush the difference.)

Then there were those who dismissed the electoral outcome by emphasizing the low voter turnout. The *Nation* editorialized:

> Only about half the eligible electorate went to the polls November 8 . . . the half-nation that votes is not what statisticians would call a random sampling. . . . [It] is heavily skewed toward the rich and the well educated, the white and the conservative. . . . Factoring out the gender gap and the minorities gap from the turnout figures, the electoral equation brutally belies the myth that "the American people" gave Bush his victory.

Yet the New York *Times* and CBS News tested the impact of voter turnout by polling a single sample of voters both before and after the election to record the preferences of those who failed to vote. On the basis of this survey, the *Times* reported that if everyone had voted, Bush would have won by an even larger margin—about 11 percentage points.

In making little of their presidential defeat the Democrats do have a more telling case in pointing to the victory they scored on the legislative side, where they marginally enhanced existing majorities in both the House and Senate. No sure explanation exists for this dichotomy in electoral behavior. William Schneider, another election analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, argues that "the higher the political office, the more ideology matters"; pointing to the easy reelection victory of Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, who is one of the Senate's most liberal members but whose state went heavily for Bush, Schneider says, "If Metzenbaum was on the presidential ticket he not only would have gotten creamed, he wouldn't have carried Ohio." And the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has noted that when voters are asked about it in surveys they state an explicit preference for divided government—a President of one party and a Congress of the other—in, perhaps, an expression of the ingrained American mistrust of strong government.

Another line of post-election Democratic rationalization held the electorate at fault, on the grounds of either its stupidity or its cupidity. Robert Reich of Harvard maintained that whereas Ronald Reagan had conditioned Americans to want a "national toastmaster" for a President, "the tragedy of Michael Dukakis is that he wanted to be chief executive." The columnist Ellen Goodman, seconded by Hendrik Hertzberg, suggested that Dukakis suffered from an "irrational belief in reason," and Marvin Kalb (formerly of CBS-TV and now at the Kennedy School at Harvard) was reportedly of the opinion that Dukakis lost because he was too principled.

Meanwhile, on the cupidity front, *Newsweek* concluded that "Bush's victory seemed less a personal endorsement than a pocketbook vote." This was a reprise of the main theme of the presidential post-mortems of 1984, according to which Reagan's reelection was largely an expression of the electorate's "greed." In a reverse twist on the same idea, Tom Wicker of the New York *Times* complained that "The Republicans have been blinding too many voters to their economic self-interest with dramatic appeals to their patriotism and 'traditional values.'"

In sum, if the voters voted Republican because they thought they would be better off, they were being piggish. If, regardless of self-interest, they voted Republican because they preferred the GOP's values, they were being pigheaded.

But the main melody sung by the Democratic chorus was that Bush had won by running a dirty campaign, a campaign of "fear and smear" and of "lies," as Dukakis himself characterized it. Dukakis's charges were endorsed during the campaign itself by numerous commentators and news reporters. On ABC's *Nightline*, Ted Koppel confided to Dukakis that Bush had taken the lead "by kicking you in the groin." Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times* charged Bush with "nativism," "McCarthy tactics," and "lying." Richard Cohen of the Washington *Post* asserted that Bush's tactics "may have changed the tone of presidential campaigns forever"—that is, for the worse. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, an obscure professor of communications at the University of Texas, achieved instant celebrity by serving up to reporters such quotable pronouncements as "The Bush advisers believe they can distort with impunity" and "What is so frightening about this is that many of us were naive

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in thinking that the nation as a whole was adequately protected from this kind of campaigning."

Laced into the charges of dirty campaigning was the notion of "racism." According to *Newsweek*, in late October "Dukakis campaign leader John Sasso asked [Jesse] Jackson to attack the Bush camp for 'racist' tactics." Jackson obliged handsomely, decrying Bush's television ads on the Massachusetts prison-furlough program as "designed to create the most horrible psychosexual fears." This apparently convinced Hendrik Hertzberg—Bush, he wrote, "quite openly exploited primitive racial-sexual fears"—as well as Hertzberg's colleague Michael Kinsley, to whom the furlough issue "taps into a thick vein of racial paranoia." Kinsley, in turn, would seem to have found a reader in NBC's Bryant Gumbel, who a couple of days later reported that Bush "tapped a rather rich vein of American racism." While most of the proliferating accusations of racism stemmed from the furlough issue, the Washington *Post*'s Juan Williams rested his case on different grounds: "Bush attacks the American Civil Liberties Union for defending criminals, appealing to the white perception that blacks are responsible for virtually all violent crime."

More original still was the allegation that the Bush campaign was not merely racist but "nativist"—anti-immigrant and anti-Greek. Pride of authorship here belongs to the novelist Philip Roth, who wrote that Bush "is highly sensitive to, and sometimes, perhaps, like millions of Americans, guiltily discomfited by, the physical signs of ethnic or racial difference." In his attack on Dukakis's veto of a bill requiring the recital of the pledge of allegiance, Bush was aiming, wrote Roth, "to stir up xenophobic longings for pure, homogeneous, picket-fence America." This esoteric charge was soon reiterated by Anthony Lewis, Hendrik Hertzberg, Mark Green, and others, including Dukakis's mother. By the time the election was over, it had entered so firmly into the conventional wisdom that *Newsweek* could assert flatly that Bush's "message was nationalist and nativist, a thinly coded way of suggesting that Dukakis was less than 100-percent American."

None of those who denounced Bush for "nativism" and anti-Greek bias paused to recall that the last candidate on a national ticket to hammer away at the symbols of partiotism was an American of Greek ancestry named Spiro Agnew. In reality, Bush's obvious target was not the fact of Dukakis's ancestral roots in Greece but his more recent roots in the environs of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where a stance of critical detachment toward one's country is taken as a mark of enlightenment. Such an attitude often seems especially inexplicable to first-, second-, or third-generation Americans, whose patriotism is usually fired by an appreciation of the refuge and opportunity afforded them by the United States. Far from being the subliminal butt of the "pledge" issue, these ethnic voters, who constitute a critical swing group (in contrast to Wasps, who are heavily Republican), were surely intended to respond to it positively.

The accusations of "racism" were similarly unfounded. Racism does remain a pernicious feature of our social landscape; but the fact is that for over two decades now, according to a wealth of survey research, prejudice against blacks has steadily diminished. Moreover, the one modern presidential election in which the rights and welfare of blacks were a pivotal issue, perhaps *the* pivotal issue, was in 1964, when Lyndon Johnson, the champion of civil rights, defeated Barry Goldwater, the champion of states' rights, by the biggest landslide in Democratic-party history.

William Safire of the New York *Times*, in an anlysis that could buttress the "racism" thesis, speculated that Dukakis's campaign foundered because of the special place given to Jesse Jackson at the Democratic convention. But Safire's thesis flies in the face of available survey data. The Dukakis campaign *peaked*, at leads of 17 and 18 percentage points, in the days following the Democratic convention; the decline came later. Furthermore, although some voters were undoubtedly "turned off" by Jesse Jackson, there is no evidence that race was the decisive factor here, as against his position on the Left fringe of American politics or his anti-Semitic utterances and associations, his revivalist style, and his checkered history. If the Democratic convention had accorded a similar degree of prominence and honor to, say, Jane Fonda, can anyone doubt that the party would have paid a price for it?

Actually, the obsequiousness displayed toward Jackson at the convention was perfectly symbolic of the new racial ethos of the Democratic party. For almost two decades now, both in their own internal procedures and in the public policies they have fostered, the Democrats, in the name of "affirmative action," have championed preferential treatment of blacks. Suppose a voter were opposed to this, adhering instead to the colorblind principle articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his "I Have a Dream" speech. Would this make him, *ipso facto*, a racist?

During the campaign, the "racism" issue coalesced around Bush's attacks on the Massachusetts prison-furlough program and in particular around the case of Willie Horton, a murderer who escaped while on furlough and committed a brutal assault and rape upon a Maryland couple. Although advertisements by the Bush campaign proper mentioned neither Horton's name nor his race, in ads run by independent groups supporting Bush there were pictures of Horton, revealing him to be black. Did this make him seem the more menacing to some viewers? Perhaps so, but the implication that voters hate blacks *per se* more than they fear criminals, or that weekend passes

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for murderers and other forms of coddling felons would stir little protest if the convicts were white, is absurd. The state of Maryland is currently being convulsed by a scandal: a rehabilitation-oriented penal institution is in danger of being closed down by legislators irate over the discovery that weekend furloughs were granted to a triple murderer, and work release to a rapist suspected of having used the occasion to commit another rape. Both convicts were white, and, to boot, the murderer was upper-class while the victim of his most heinous killing was black. But the people of Maryland—surprise?—are outraged nevertheless.

Just as the charges of racism and nativism were nonsensical, so there was little to buttress the wider accusation that Bush had run a dirty campaign, or even, as NBC's Jim Vance suggested, one of the dirtiest campaigns in U.S. history. Writing in *Public Opinion,* Suzanne Garment has reminded us that in the early days of the Republic, campaign mud was flung much more freely: John Adams, for example, was charged with having put his running mate to the chore of procuring mistresses, while Andrew Jackson was charged with "gambling, cock-fighting, . . . slave-trading, drunkenness, theft, lying." The columnist Suzanne Fields has recalled Harry Truman's allegation that the "clique" behind Thomas Dewey were "the same men who delivered us Mussolini, Hitler, and Tojo."

And if the Bush campaign was no dirtier or even less dirty than some in American history, more importantly it was no dirtier than his rival's. Not only did Dukakis aides recklessly spread the charges of racism and nativism, they accused Bush of marital infidelity on the basis of rumors no news organization was able to substantiate. Dukakis himself charged Bush with "McCarthyism," and with being "unfit for the presidency." He linked Bush vaguely to Watergate, to the Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, and to various scandals in the Reagan/Bush administration. "A fish rots from the head," he said, insinuatingly. Among Dukakis supporters, Congressman Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta likened Bush to Hitler and Goebbels, and according to the Washington *Post*'s David Broder, Democrats "passed out flyers identifying Ayatollah Khomeini as 'George Bush's friend.'" When it came to impugning people's patriotism, moreover, Dukakis himself proved no slouch: noting reports that some Bush advisers had worked for the government of the Bahamas, he commented that "In a Dukakis White House, the staff will pledge allegiance to only one flag: Old Glory." And on the "nativism" front, it was the Dukakis campaign that fielded a television ad featuring the Japanese national symbol, a rising sun, as a looming threat to America.

IN CALLING Bush guilty of "smears" and "lies," Dukakis had in mind the effort of the Bush campaign to paint him as a "liberal" of the up-to-date, Massachusetts variety. Dukakis wished to avoid being so identified. On three main issues—the furlough program, the pledge of allegiance, and membership in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)—he sought to explain his behavior as devoid of ideological implications. But on the specifics of these three issues, as well as on the general point, Bush's version was the more truthful.

Dukakis pointed out, for example, that Massachusetts was not alone in having a furlough program. Other state governments and the federal government have them, too, and murderers have been furloughed in many of these jurisdictions, including by the federal government under Reagan/Bush and by California when Reagan was governor; and some of those furloughed have taken the opportunity to commit new crimes. Dukakis also pointed out that the Massachusetts program had been adopted under his Republican predecessor, and that under his own administration its scope had been restricted.

All of this was narrowly accurate but misleading. The essential point is that Massachusetts has furlough provisions more liberal than those of the federal government and all but a few states; that these and related penal questions have been hot issues in Massachusetts; and that Governor Dukakis has been a force for leniency.

In his first year in office, Governor Dukakis vetoed a bill reestablishing the death penalty, leaving life imprisonment without possibility of parole as the most severe penalty in Massachusetts. The next year the legislature voted to prohibit furloughs for first-degree murderers, but Dukakis used a pocket veto to kill the bill. In part as a result of these two vetoes, Massachusetts was left in the unique position of authorizing furloughs for prisoners serving life-without-parole, a practice that cannot be justified by the normal rationale for furlough programs, namely, to help prepare prisoners for their release. Even after Willie Horton's crimes in Maryland made Massachusetts headlines in 1987, legislative allies of the governor blocked a tightening of the furlough law; it was not until 1988 that Dukakis, under mounting public pressure, finally announced he would not veto such a measure, and in the spring he signed one that had passed the legislature by a wide margin.

As is by now well known, Dukakis also vetoed a bill that would have required Massachusetts schoolteachers to lead students in the pledge of allegiance. He argued that he had no choice in the matter, since an advisory opinion by the Massachusetts Supreme Court had held the bill to be unconstitutional. Bush's assertion that *he* would have signed such a law only proved, said Dukakis, that Bush was "unfit" to be President. But according to L. Gordon Crovitz, who investigated the story for the *Wall Street Journal,* Dukakis had indicated his own prior opposition to the pledge requirement in his request for the

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court's opinion. The Massachusetts court acknowledged in its opinion that the U.S. Supreme Court had not ruled directly on the issue in this form, so its decision necessarily reflected its own judicial philosophy—a liberal one, thanks in part to Dukakis's appointments. And the advisory opinion, weaker than a case decision, was not binding on the governor (whose veto was in any event overridden by the legislature).

All these facts go to show that the pledge decision reflected Dukakis's political views, not merely a more or less reluctant determination to execute his legal duties. Of course there was no reason to believe that Dukakis was against the pledge in itself. Contrary to the demagogic implication of Bush's rhetorical question, "What is it about the pledge of allegiance that upsets him so much?," Dukakis was merely against requiring teachers to lead it. But considering some of the reasons advanced by teachers for objecting—in the words of the Massachusetts attorney general, "because they believe the phrase, 'with liberty and justice for all,' which is part of the pledge, is untrue"—it is clear that heavy political freight was being carried by this seemingly procedural issue of civil liberties.

Which brings us to the ACLU. Since the preservation of civil liberty itself is predicated on the distinction between procedure and substance ("I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it"), it behooves a civil-liberties association to be especially vigilant in avoiding wider questions of public policy. So the ACLU once was. But twenty years ago—during the 1968 New York City teachers' strike, to be precise—the ACLU began to convert itself from a civil-liberties group into an all-purpose combat organization for "progressive" causes. In that conflict the ACLU decided that the cause of "black power" deserved precedence over the principle of due process in the firing of public-school teachers, a principle traditionally defended by civil libertarians.

In the years since, the ACLU has continued down the path of Left-liberal advocacy, agitating against U.S. policy in Vietnam and, later, Central America; joining in efforts to weaken America's overseas intelligence activities; and carrying even its narrowly civil-libertarian concerns to absurd extremes—for instance, in defending child pornography as a form of free speech and espousing decriminalization of all drug use. Indeed, there is probably no other organization whose evolution so perfectly expresses the transformation of liberalism in the last two decades. Small wonder that Bush seized on Dukakis's boast of membership in the ACLU as a symbol of his liberal inclinations.

In sum, although Democrats and journalists complained that, in the words of *Time*, "Little can justify Bush's cynical exploitation of the pseudo-issues of crime and patriotism," Bush's strategists recognized that if they could successfully identify Dukakis as the type of liberal who does not get worked up about law-and-order and patriotism, they would influence many voters against him. Are voters not entitled to choose on such a basis?

WHAT made the approach of the Bush campaign so effective was not merely that it was negative—indeed it was, though not much more so than the Dukakis campaign—but that it reversed the traditional roles of insurgent and incumbent. Incumbents have many advantages, but they must defend their records, while they can be criticized not only for their own errors but also for whatever else went wrong during their tenure. For an incumbent to go on the attack is risky because it suggests that he wants to steer attention away from his record. Jimmy Carter tried this strategy in 1980 and got himself into trouble. James Reston of the New York *Times* called Carter's campaign "vicious and personal," and *Time* concluded that his "tactics boomerang[ed]." But Bush succeeded in his determination, as William Schneider put it, to "turn the election from a referendum on Bush into a referendum on Dukakis." Why?

One hypothesis has it that a key liability of Bush's was the perception that he was weak—the famous "wimp factor." While a Carter attacking seemed mean, a Bush attacking seemed tough. Perhaps so; but a better explanation would point to substance rather than form. It may be that Bush's attacks simply signaled to the electorate that he shared its values.

According to the New York *Times*, in July more voters answered no than yes (by a margin of 16 percentage points) to the question of whether Dukakis was "tough enough in dealing with crime and criminals." This was *before* Bush's attacks on the furlough program. By late October, after the furlough ads, voters more often still answered no than yes, but the margin had *shrunk* somewhat, to 13 percentage points. The really dramatic change, however, occurred in the responses to the identical question about Bush. In July the voters were more doubtful about Bush's toughness on crime than about Dukakis's; a plurality of 26 percentage points found Bush not "tough enough." By October this had completely reversed; a solid majority found Bush "tough enough," and by a whopping margin of 36 percentage points! In his attack on Dukakis, Bush seems to have convinced the voters that he hates crime as much as they do.

It has also been said that the reason Bush's negative tactics were so effective was that Dukakis did not respond, or did not respond quickly enough. But conventional wisdom has usually held that candidates ought to be wary of replying to such attacks lest they permit their opponents to set the agenda. In any case, Dukakis did respond fairly soon, and the strategy of his response was of a piece with his earlier strategy of delay.

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"At first," the New York *Times* quoted one of Dukakis's aides, "we used to read this [Bush] stuff and laugh and say, How can this be, why would people take this seriously?" Then, when the Dukakis camp realized that the Bush attacks were hurting, it countered with a series of ads depicting Bush's tacticians as a covey of media manipulators cynically seducing the electorate by talking about furloughs and the pledge instead of the "real issues." Implicitly, these ads told the voters to stop being so dumb. But the problem was that the voters understood Dukakis better than he understood them. His very insistence that crime and permissiveness and patriotism were not real issues only confirmed what Bush was saying about him.

How else could Dukakis have replied? Writing in *Time*, Garry Wills recommended that:

> On the Horton issue, Dukakis should have had a panel of penologists appearing to explain the nation's furlough systems, their risks and rewards as proved over time, and comparing the various state and federal programs with the Massachusetts one. On the ACLU, Dukakis should have appeared with officers of that organization and joked about all the times they had disagreed in the past, while asserting that what makes America great is the preservation of free discussion and advocacy.

The fecklessness of such advice—how many votes would it have retrieved?—only serves to highlight Dukakis's problem. Bush had nailed him as a liberal, and that is what he was, and had long been.

In 1968, as a young state legislator, Dukakis had led the Eugene McCarthy insurgents who ousted the old-line leadership of the Brookline Massachusetts Democratic party, and it was as the hero of the McCarthy movement that Dukakis first won nomination for statewide office, as the candidate for lieutenant governor in 1970. Now, almost two decades later, furloughs, the pledge, and the ACLU were hardly the only indicators of his continuing liberalism.

In domestic policy generally, Governor Dukakis's record was summarized in an article signed by three Massachusetts activists that appeared in the "independent socialist weekly," *In These Times:*

> In three terms as governor of Massachusetts, Dukakis has been an effective liberal reformer with a strong managerial bent. Liberal groups have generally found Dukakis sympathetic to their causes and willing to devote state resources to solve social and economic problems of poor and working-class people, but often too willing to compromise—on regulation and taxes—for the sake of political consensus.

Dukakis also serves, together with leftists like Ron Dellums, Randall Forsberg, Eleanor Smeal, Jesse Jackson, and William Winpisinger, on the advisory board of the Jobs With Peace Campaign. Warning that "we are moving rapidly toward a permanent 'war economy,'" this group proposes cutting the defense budget by $80 billion (about 25 percent) and shifting the funds to domestic social programs. When he was asked about this proposal in the second presidential debate, Dukakis replied: "I don't happen to share that goal. It's an example of how oftentimes we may be associated with organizations, all of whose particular positions we don't support." This response was disingenuous. The word "campaign" in the name Jobs With Peace Campaign is meant to stress that this is a single-issue group; the $80-billion transfer proposal is its one and only "particular position."

In line with all this, Dukakis was an active supporter of the nuclear-freeze movement. He opposed not only the MX missile, supported by both Presidents Carter and Reagan, but also the Midgetman, the alternative to MX advanced mainly by Democratic military reformers. He had used his position as governor to block participation by Massachusetts in some aspects of U.S. nuclear-defense planning. He opposed the Strategic Defense Initiative. True, he sought to offset this by calling for a "conventional defense initiative," but since conventional weapons are more expensive than nuclear weapons, and since he did not favor increasing the defense budget, the stance seemed little more than sloganeering.

A strong believer in arms control, Dukakis advocated a variety of proposals that went beyond the current U.S.-Soviet agenda. As the Washington *Post* reported, "Several of these proposals 'reflect the thinking of the peace movement and the freeze movement, which hope to end the arms race, not simply regulate it,' said David Cortright, a senior associate at SANE/Freeze, an anti-nuclear group." More generally on relations with the Soviet Union, and again according to the Washington *Post:*

> His aides say Dukakis, 54, seems a perfect match for Gorbachev, 57, because they are about the same age, and both are lawyers, face severe economic problems at home, and share similar beliefs in the theories of "interdependence" of nations today and of "reasonable sufficiency" in nuclear arms.

In other foreign-policy areas, Dukakis's main theme was that the United States should rely more on the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and other international bodies. He criticized the American invasion of Grenada, the bombing of Libya, and the reflagging of tankers in the Persian Gulf. He strongly opposed U.S. military aid to the UNITA guerrillas in Angola, while repeatedly stating he "would not rule out" furnishing military aid to African National Congress guerrillas in South Africa. In Central America, he opposed aid to the *contras,* sometimes referring to them, in the Sandinistas' derisive propaganda term, as "mercenaries." Instead he

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said he supported the Arias peace plan; pressed by reporters on what he would do if the Sandinista government reneged on its pledges under the plan, Dukakis replied characteristically, "I would work with our democratic neighbors and allies in Central and Latin America."

In addition to emphasizing reliance on international bodies, Dukakis often advocated issuing verbal "challenges" to adversaries. Thus he coupled his opposition to existing proposals for modernizing America's intercontinental missile force with the idea that we "challenge the Soviet Union . . . to eliminate all of their SS-18s," their largest, most deadly ICBM. Similarly, he joined his opposition to the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf with the proposal that we "challenge China and the Soviet Union . . . to stop the sale of long-range missiles to all countries in the Middle East." In these formulas, the word "challenge" seemed calculated to give a hard-edged sound to proposals that boiled down to unilateral restraint on the part of the United States.

THAT Dukakis's liberalism was the source of his defeat is shown by a variety of survey data.* During the summer, a Louis Harris poll asked voters whether they would prefer a President who was liberal, moderate, or conservative. Forty-one percent answered moderate, 40 percent conservative, and only 13 percent liberal. In a New York *Times* survey, only 15 percent of respondents described themselves as liberal, the lowest figure since the paper began asking this question.

Not surprisingly, then, as more voters came to see Dukakis as a liberal, support for his candidacy dropped. The proportion of voters so identifying him grew from 27 percent in July to 43 percent in October, while those viewing him as either a moderate or a conservative dropped from 51 percent to 40, all according to a CBS/New York *Times* poll. (During the same period the proportion viewing Bush as a conservative increased steadily although not very sharply.)

In October, an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll asked voters whether they agreed that "Dukakis is too liberal to be a good President" or that "Bush is too conservative." Twenty-five percent found Bush too conservative, while 37 percent found Dukakis too liberal. An ABC/Washington *Post* poll, worded slightly differently, found 31 percent calling Dukakis too liberal and 22 percent calling Bush too conservative. An election-day exit poll by CBS/New York *Times* produced a striking ideological symmetry: four-fifths of those voters calling themselves liberals voted for Dukakis, four-fifths of those calling themselves conservative voted for Bush, while those calling themselves moderates divided evenly. Dukakis's problem? Only 18 percent of the voters called themselves liberal, while 33 percent said they were conservative.

In regarding Dukakis as too liberal, voters seemed to have in mind his positions both on domestic and on foreign policy. Indeed, while furloughs, the pledge, and the ACLU were the focal points of Bush's attacks, there is some evidence to suggest that defense policy, which Bush also pressed, albeit somewhat less strongly, was Dukakis's most salient vulnerability. In a CBS/New York *Times* poll in late October, 41 percent of the likely electorate said that Dukakis would weaken the nation's defenses, while only 3 percent said the same of Bush. When voters in that poll were asked to name the single most important issue, the economy was cited most often, followed by defense and foreign policy, with a constellation of social issues, including crime, much further down the list. A national exit poll conducted by the Los Angeles *Times*, which allowed voters to name more than one issue, found the budget deficit mentioned most frequently, followed closely by national defense, abortion, and crime. Yet national defense was clearly the most consequential because those who named other issues tended to divide between Bush and Dukakis by relatively small margins, 3 to 2 or 2 to 1, while those who named national defense broke for Bush almost 6 to 1.

DUKAKIS was, of course, aware from the outset of the low regard in which voters have come to hold liberalism—hence his declaration in his acceptance speech that "this election isn't about ideology. It's about competence." And until the last days of the campaign, he spurned the label. "Ted, I'm not a liberal," he said to Koppel on *Nightline* two weeks before election day.

Even amid the glow of the Democratic convention, savvy Democrats were aware that ideology posed a hazard to the campaign. The Washington *Post* reported:

> Even among Northern delegates, the smell of victory is tempered by fears that Dukakis could get painted into a liberal corner—that the combination of his pro-choice stance on abortion, his support of gun control, his opposition to certain weapons systems, and the controversy over Massachusetts' furlough program for criminals, could collectively be used by Bush to define the public's as yet unformed image of Dukakis as unacceptably far to the Left.
>
> . . . [A] member of Congress from a liberal district, fully confident that he will have little problem with Dukakis in his own territory, said, "Everyone here is very enthusiastic, but I think this is going to be a very tough contest. People just don't know yet that Dukakis is an ACLU liberal with a funny-sounding name."

The prescient Congressman was only slightly off-target. The electorate did already know Dukakis's name. It was the ACLU part that it learned about later.

* I am indebted for much of this information to *Public Opinion*, and in particular to its managing editor Karlyn Keene.

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The Democrats tried to compensate for their vulnerability by careful attention to style. In 1984 the delegates had all waved American flags from the convention floor. This time, the Washington *Post* reported, "Their carefully controlled and staged convention strongly indicates that they understand what it was about their collective televised self-portrait that repelled and even frightened much of the nation" during past gatherings. The *Post* cited a member of the party's national finance council who "gestured at her stylish silk dress and said with a wry smile: 'Look at me. I look like a Republican. And I'm 60's Woodstock. I haven't seen a woman in polyester pants since I've been here.'"

But the Democrats were kidding themselves if they thought their problems stemmed from style; anyhow, they even had the style wrong. Many of the voters they had been losing to the Republicans wear a lot more polyester than silk.

Late in the campaign, his ratings down, Dukakis abruptly shifted tactics, declaring, "I'm a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy." A day or two afterward, he added Lyndon Johnson to the list. The indecision over Johnson was indicative of the inherent weakness in Dukakis's new line, for as I have noted, his own career on the state and national scene had been launched in the Eugene McCarthy insurgency *against* LBJ. The Republicans were quick to retort that Dukakis was in reality a liberal in the tradition of McGovern, Carter, and Mondale. Which in turn prompted some expressions of righteous indignation at the Republicans for attempting to redefine liberalism as McGovernism.

In all this there was high irony. Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson were all liberal on economic issues, hawkish on foreign policy, and relatively conservative on social questions, except when it came to the cause of civil rights, which all four helped to advance, on the common understanding that it meant nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for individuals. As for the new liberalism that congealed around the presidential campaigns of Eugene McCarthy in 1968 and George McGovern in 1972, it too was liberal on economic issues, although less devotedly so, but it was dovish on foreign policy and liberal on social issues; although supportive of civil rights, it reconceived these as preferential treatment or "affirmative action."

A few Democrats, most notably Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson, persevered in the older variant of liberal belief. They were quite willing to engage in terminological compromise, such as distinguishing between the "new liberalism" and "traditional liberalism," or between "McGovern liberalism" and "Jackson liberalism." But the McGovernites, and their sympathizers in the world of letters and journalism, would brook no sharing of the name. Senator Jackson and his ilk were relentlessly identified as "conservative Democrats" and sometimes as "Nixon Democrats." Eventually, the McGovernites coined and popularized the term "neoconservative" to define the Jackson liberals. Although at first those so described resisted the label, over the years and one by one they gave up what seemed a hopeless semantic battle. The McGovernites' victory was complete: henceforth, they alone would be known as liberals.

Now in 1988, in the week before the election, here were Dukakis and his supporters trying desperately to detach the word liberal from its McGovernite associations and reinvoke its earlier associations. That they failed was far from being the fault of Republican skullduggery, but rather was a case of chickens coming home to roost.

One national poll asked voters if they would describe Dukakis as a liberal in the Roosevelt-Truman-Kennedy tradition or in that of McGovern-Mondale. Twenty-one percent chose the former, while 34 percent chose the latter. McGovern himself concurred: "To repudiate the McGovern Democrats in 1988 is to repudiate what is now the mainstream of the Democratic party." This is largely true, and to the extent it remains true (and barring, as some Democrats now wistfully dream, a major economic downturn), the White House is likely to continue to elude the party's grasp.

After the election, many Democrats consoled themselves by arguing defiantly that Bush's victory conveyed "no mandate." On the Thursday following the Tuesday ballot, the New York *Times* editorialized that "Mr. Bush's victory . . . cannot fairly be called a mandate." Anthony Lewis wrote on the op-ed page that same day, "The remoteness of the 1988 campaign from the realities of government . . . has deprived George Bush of any mandate on major policy issues." And a guest columnist, Norman Ornstein, completed the *Times*'s editorial-page offerings for that day by opining simply that Bush had "no mandate." Ironically, in the same morning's *Times*, a page-one news story reported a different conclusion: "The issues that Mr. Bush made his own—crime, strong national defense, and low taxes—were all cited in polls as central to those who said they had cast ballots for him."

There was a familiar air to the "no mandate" verdict. Four years earlier, after the 1984 election (as Everett Carll Ladd reminds us), the editors of the *Times* had judged that "President Reagan's lonely landslide is a personal victory with little precise policy mandate." And after the 1980 election, the Washington *Post*'s Haynes Johnson had written:

> Victorious presidential candidates always claim to have received a great mandate to carry out their promises after an election. Most of their claims are false. . . . Ronald Reagan's victory was no different from the others in these re-

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spects. He won because of a pervasive feeling of national failures. . . .

There was some truth in Johnson's argument—in 1980 the electorate had not merely chosen Reagan, it had rejected Carter—as there also was now in the contention that Bush had "no mandate." But the truth contained little consolation for the Democrats; it lay in the fact that Bush, running a largely negative campaign, had won a mandate to continue on the path of the Reagan/Bush administration, and also a mandate not to be like Michael Dukakis.

IN ALL these various ways, then, the majority of Democratic-party leaders have insisted on explaining their defeat by alibis rather than by reasons. A minority, however, have called on the party to recognize that it lost this presidential election on the basis of substance, and is likely to lose again unless it changes. This minority is grouped around the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM).

The DLC was founded after the 1984 election by Charles Robb, former governor of Virginia and now elected to the Senate, and former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt. It is the body responsible for creating "super Tuesday," having convinced the legislatures of Southern states to move their presidential primaries to a single date with the hope of providing a springboard for a moderate or conservative Democratic candidate. (The scheme backfired when Jesse Jackson emerged as a major beneficiary of those primaries.) CDM, with which I have a long affiliation, was founded after the 1972 election by supporters of "Scoop" Jackson and Hubert Humphrey in an effort to win the party back from McGovernism to their brand of liberalism.

The challenge that confronts these groups is daunting. The party will not alter course without a bruising internal fight. For one thing, many Democrats have concluded that the lesson of 1988 is that the party needs to be more rather than less bold about its liberal identity. Thus Tom Wicker:

> Many failings have contributed to Michael Dukakis's lagging campaign for President but one seems to be at the heart of the problem—the candidate's long, lame, and basically unbelievable effort to deny that he and his party represent the great liberal tradition of the last half-century.

Since the election several op-ed articles have made the same point. And a formidable standard-bearer of this view exists in the person of Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, who declared a week after the election:

> . . . my brother . . . embraced the "liberal" label *without hesitation*. . . . And I believe that if he had started campaigning that way a few weeks earlier this fall, Mike Dukakis and not George Bush would be taking the oath of office next January. . . . There's nothing wrong with liberalism in America or with the Democratic party that 1992 won't cure.

In addition to die-hard liberals of the Wicker and Kennedy stripe, a still more formidable obstacle looms in the path of those who would change the party's course—namely, Jesse Jackson and his supporters. They made their mark in 1984 and strengthened their position in 1988, when Jackson ran second in the primaries. After the primaries, said the Washington *Post*, Dukakis's supporters and Jackson's "work[ed] in close harmony . . . in setting up a carefully choreographed program for [the] Democratic National Convention." And at the convention, Jackson was given such a central position that the ticket was presented almost as a troika. His convention manager Ron Brown exulted, "I don't think any second-place finisher ever got to play as important a role."

Already, Jackson is off and running for 1992. He told the Chicago *Sun-Times* days before the election:

> If Michael Dukakis loses on Tuesday the next political season will begin on Wednesday. . . . I came within a stone's throw of winning my party's nomination. . . . The full scope of my leadership has yet to blossom and flourish.

His one-quarter share of the 1988 convention delegates should assure him a roughly similar share of seats on the Democratic National Committee.

Moreover, Jackson has a cadre of grass-roots activists, organized partly through the vehicle of the Rainbow Coalition, that no other grouping or leader in the Democratic party can match. His candidacy has galvanized the American hard Left into electoral activity as never since the 1948 campaign of Henry Wallace. But what makes the Rainbow far more promising than the Wallace effort is Jackson's mass base in the black electorate. The excitement this causes on the Left was expressed recently by Andrew Kopkind of the *Nation*:

> Whether the Democratic hierarchy likes it or not, Jackson became the leader of the party on November 9, and he is already its front-runner for the nomination in 1992. Let's make it clear right away that the struggle between now and then will be determined by the I-word: ideology.

WHO among today's Democrats will have the stomach to take these people on? Throughout the 1988 primaries the Democrats staged literally dozens of debates, and yet, as Ben Wattenberg of the American Enterprise Institute has pointed out, rarely was Jackson challenged on matters of substance by any of his competitors. When Senator Al Gore of Tennessee finally had the temerity to do so in the friendly environs of New York, he was castigated by the party chairman, Paul Kirk. New York Mayor Ed Koch's attacks on Jackson brought down the

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wrath of Governor Mario Cuomo, former party chairman Robert Strauss, and so many others that Koch humbly recanted. And when the primary race boiled down to a contest between Dukakis and Jackson, Dukakis continued to insist that there was little substantive disagreement betweeen them.

Now the party has dug a deeper hole for itself by its cynical exploitation of the "racism" charge against the Republicans. The same reckless charge will cut even deeper within the party, and Jackson knows just how to use it to insulate himself and his extreme policy positions from criticism. He said to William Raspberry of the Washington *Post* after the election, "Calling me a leftist is just another way of saying 'nigger.'"

Even without the Jackson factor, shifting the Democrats' course would take an enormous fight. During the years that the McGovernite liberals won the party over to their position, they engaged in fierce and relentless polemics against their adversaries. Beginning with the late Allard Lowenstein's "Dump Johnson" movement, the McGovernites challenged incumbent Democratic officeholders in scores of primaries, without regard to whether this divisive tactic would result in a seat being lost to the Republicans. Every Democratic officeholder knew that he had to choose between joining the McGovernites or having to fight a primary battle for each reelection.

Once in Congress the McGovernites overrode seniority in order to impose their discipline on the Democratic caucus. Thus in the early 1980's the moderate Congressman Gus Yatron, though no hawk, was toppled from the chairmanship of the House subcommittee dealing with Latin America for insufficient zeal in opposing Reagan administration policies, and was replaced by the reliably zealous Michael Barnes. When Barnes gave up his seat, the chairmanship passed without protest to Congressman George Crockett who has a long record of support for Communist causes. In 1987, Congressman Les Aspin, the highly respected chairman of the Armed Services Committee, was nearly unseated for having voted for aid to the *contras*, an indiscretion he did not repeat. Analogous pressures have been brought to bear, perhaps less directly, on House Speaker Jim Wright and Majority Leader Tom Foley, both of whom were once officers of CDM.

It is hard to imagine the Democratic conservatives or moderates undertaking factional warfare against these forces. Consider the case of Bruce Babbitt. After co-founding the Democratic Leadership Council, he next made his presence felt on the national political stage as an outspoken opponent of aid to the *contras*. Then he ran for President, and when his campaign faltered, he threw his support implicitly to Jesse Jackson. As soon as the election was over, he was once more calling upon the party to move to the Center.

This year, the DLC has come up with one of its first foreign-policy recommendations: some form of national service for the nation's youth. Not very bold stuff, this; and as if to underscore the point, for its spokesman on the issue the DLC has enlisted Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, one of the Senate's most liberal members.

The DLC's problem is exemplified by its "super Tuesday" program. It was easy to go into the friendly terrain of Southern state legislatures to request a change in primary dates, painless to seek a panacea for the party's ills by tinkering once again with the nominating rules. Perhaps the party could be saved without a frontal challenge to its dominant liberal wing? But then, having set an example of caution itself, the DLC could not find a single candidate of its own kind to enter the primaries and to take advantage of the springboard it had created.

As for CDM, it, unlike the DLC, has always had the stomach for a fight. But although CDM has rallied some Democratic legislators for tough votes on *contra* aid, almost none since "Scoop" Jackson has been willing to join it in internecine combat against the party's Left.

MOVING the party back to the Center will require not only a direct challenge to its current orthodoxy, but a challenge based on substance. It will not suffice to criticize the liberal position merely for being impolitic. The McGovernites transformed the party by waging an impassioned struggle on behalf of deeply felt causes—antiwar, affirmative action, reform. They will only be beaten by Democrats who believe just as passionately in other causes: freedom abroad, equal rights (not preferential treatment) at home, a strong defense, and renewed respect for such "middle-class" values as keeping murderers locked up in prison.

At this juncture, the political horizon is murkier than usual. But what is clearly perceptible is that the forces now organizing to pull the Democrats down the suicidal path of the British Labor party seem stronger and more determined than those ready to push the party back toward the Center. The lessons of defeat could prove salutary, but first those lessons must be absorbed, and then they must be translated into policy. Unless and until that happens, the Democrats will continue to be rejected as unqualified to lead the nation.

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Victorian Values/Jewish Values

Gertrude Himmelfarb

In her recent election campaign, replying to a television interviewer who observed, rather derisively, that she seemed to be approving of "Victorian values," Margaret Thatcher enthusiastically agreed: "Oh exactly. Very much so. Those were the values when our country became great." Quite suddenly, "Victorian values" seized the headlines and became an election issue.

To Mrs. Thatcher those values were self-evident. (She preferred to call them "virtues," but the more modish word prevailed.) How could one not approve of hard work, diligence, thrift, responsibility, civility, devotion to family, respect for law and order—all those good old virtues?

A remarkable number of people thought otherwise. Neil Kinnock, the leader of the opposition, declared that those were the inhuman, selfish, materialistic values that Dickens had so memorably portrayed in *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*—the values of an England where women and children labored in cotton mills and mines while the rich wallowed in luxury and preached the gospel of hard work. Church leaders quoted texts from the New Testament designed to prove that the Victorian values were not Christian values. Editorial writers protested against the confusion of religious and secular values (this in a country that has an offical state church). Journalists cited unemployment statistics suggesting that hard work was irrelevant if there was no work available. Prince Charles toured inner-city areas and intimated that self-help was not helping very much. Literary critics objected that Victorianism was a species of sanctimonious piety and hypocritical morality. Historians pointed out that the Victorian values were not uniquely Victorian—they were Christian values, or Puritan values, or Methodist values, or bourgeois values—and in any case, no one, ever, and least of all the Victorians, observed them.

After my own essays were mentioned in newspaper editorials and columns, I received moving letters from people nostalgically recalling their own Victorian parents and grandparents. When I was asked by an adviser to Mrs. Thatcher to participate in a conference on Victorian values—this only a few weeks before the general election—it occurred to me that perhaps all this was camouflage to avoid addressing more urgent issues and that the fuss would die down once the election was safely over. In fact, the controversy continues, thanks to the Prime Minister herself who has returned to the subject again and again, declaring it to be at the heart of her program.

It is a curious and rare phenomenon: a Prime Minister, having achieved significant economic and political goals in her preceding terms of office, enters her third term determined to consolidate those achievements by rooting them in the moral principles and practices which, she firmly believes, can alone sustain them. She has made morality the issue not for rhetorical effect or partisan advantage but as a matter of policy and conviction. She is not content to cut taxes, privatize industry, encourage home-ownership, stimulate trade, and otherwise promote a free and prosperous economy. She feels it necessary to legitimize and, so to speak, moralize that agenda, to show that it is not only practical and expedient but also right and proper.

Capitalism has always required moral legitimization but has not always received it, certainly not from politicians in high places. It did not even always receive it in Victorian England, before socialism usurped the high moral ground by claiming a monopoly of social justice and compassion. Even then the critics of capitalism—Cobbett and Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris—were often more articulate and passionate than the defenders. What the Victorians did have, however, was an ethos—a generally accepted (although not always observed) code of behavior—which was congenial to capitalism and which implicitly sanctioned and validated it.

The historian who denies that there was such a code by citing all the deviations from it is surely missing the most elementary fact about morality, which is that it can remain a reality even when it is violated in practice. Hypocrisy, La Roche-

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foucauld reminds us, is "the homage that vice pays to virtue." The Victorians, who went to such efforts to conceal their sexual "irregularities," as they delicately put it, or, when concealment was not possible, sought to domesticate them, to give them the appearance of propriety, were surely testifying to the power of a code that continued to bind them even as they bent it to meet their special circumstances. One thinks of George Eliot whose nonmarriage to George Lewes (because he could not be divorced from his wife) was as domestic and conventional an arrangement as any legal marriage. They did not flout their irregular relationship; on the contrary, they tried desperately to regularize it. In the true meaning of that much abused expression, the code was "more honor'd in the breach than the observance."

And so too with the other values (as they are now called) that Mrs. Thatcher attributed to the Victorians—work, thrift, prudence, temperance, above all self-reliance and personal responsibility. Of course these were not uniquely Victorian values. In her address a few months ago to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Mrs. Thatcher described them as "Judaic-Christian" values, and elsewhere she associated them with John Wesley, the 18th-century founder of Methodism. But it was in the 19th century that they acquired a special urgency. For it was then, when the social and moral order (and to a lesser extent the political order as well) was threatened by the accelerated pace of industrialism and capitalism, that these values helped stabilize, legitimize, and "moralize" that order.

There was perhaps no virtue more often invoked, more idealized and revered by the Victorians than work. "Work is worship," Carlyle declared. "All true work is sacred; in all true work . . . there is something of divineness . . . . No man has worked, or can work, except religiously; not even the poor day-laborer, the weaver of your coat, the sewer of your shoes." And not even, Carlyle continued, the industrialist and capitalist, the "working aristocracy" and "captains of industry," who were "virtually the captains of the world; if there be no nobleness in them, there will never be an aristocracy more." Carlyle, as usual, was being melodramatic; but he was also, as usual, expressing a sentiment that was widely held—by radicals and conservatives, by workers and capitalists. He knew, as everyone did, that there were idlers among the rich—"master un-workers," he called them—as well as among the poor—the habitual vagrants, beggars, and paupers whom contemporaries spoke of as the "undeserving poor." But these were seen as excrescences, deformities. They did not define the prevailing ethos; they defined the deviations from it, the abnormal rather than the norm.

Some historians do not deny the prominence of work in the Victorian ethic: what they deny is the legitimacy of the ethic itself. There is a theory popular among radical historians because it accounts for a variety of phenomena that do not lend themselves to conventional Marxist interpretations—this is the "social-control thesis." According to this thesis, the "work ethic" and all the values associated with it—thrift, prudence, diligence, punctuality, self-discipline, self-reliance—were "middle-class values," "bourgeois values," which were foisted upon the working class by the middle class for purposes of "social control": to imbue the workers with the values that would make them productive members of the labor force and docile members of society as well.

The implications of this thesis are rarely confronted by these historians. If these were middle-class values, alien to the working class, what were the values that were presumably indigenous to the working class? Were the workers, by nature or preference, indolent rather than industrious, profligate rather than frugal, drunk rather than sober, promiscuous rather than faithful, dependent rather than independent? And how did this perversion of their natural values come about? Why did the working class betray its own values and embrace those of its enemy—values designed to exploit and subjugate it?

The obvious explanation is the familiar Marxist one: that the working class was the victim of "false consciousness." Just as it did not (still does not) always understand its true interests—hence the absence of a proletarian revolution—so it did not understand its own values. Unwittingly it adopted the values of the ruling class, of the dominant, "hegemonic" (as the Marxist says) culture, the bourgeois culture. The difficulty with this explanation is that it is not very flattering to the working class.

It must be remembered that the social-control thesis—together with its corollary, the theory of false consciousness—is advanced not by reactionary historians seeking to denigrate the working class but by radical historians ostensibly sympathetic to it, historians who, as one eloquently said, want to rescue the poor and the oppressed from "the enormous condescension of posterity." But who is guilty of this condescension? Is it the so-called bourgeois historian who attributes to the working class the values professed by the rest of society and which he himself holds dear? Or the radical historian who assigns to the working class a distinctive set of values which he does not dare define—and which he himself does not share because he is not of that class? Is it more condescending to credit workers with a true knowledge of their values and interests? Or to portray them as ignorant of their own values and interests, as the deluded, unhappy victims of "false consciousness"?

And who is more faithful to the historical reality: the historian who requires a theory of false consciousness to account for the inconvenient fact

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that most Victorian workers (like most workers today) did seem to share those supposedly middle-class values? Or the historian who recognizes and respects that fact—who knows, moreover, that it was not only the "labor aristocracy," as is sometimes claimed, who shared those values but many less skilled workers as well, even if they less often realized them in practice? The memoirs of the most militant and radical workers, the Chartists, provide poignant testimony to their efforts to be temperate and thrifty—"respectable," as they said. That much maligned word, "respectability," was at the heart of the Victorian ethos, the ethos of the working class as much as of the middle class. Indeed, the central tenet of Chartism, universal suffrage, was based on the claim to respectability, for political equality presupposed moral equality—which is to say, respectability.

Radical historians are contemptuous of those eminent Victorians who, they say, patronized the poor by trying to make them respectable: housing reformers who provided apartments at low rents but insisted upon the prompt payment of rent; sanitary reformers who installed sewage and running water and preached the virtues of cleanliness; educational reformers who passed a public-education act to promote literacy; settlement-house workers who gave adult-education courses that would be the equivalent of an American college degree today; social workers who distributed charity while dispensing lessons in domestic economy; philanthropists who organized and subsidized societies for the relief of every variety of affliction and misfortune—all acting on the assumption that the poor had only to be helped to help themselves, that the poor wanted for themselves the same things that the reformers wanted for them.

The reformers may have been unrealistic in their actions, intentions, and expectations. But are they to be condemned for "imposing" (if that is the right word) upon the poor the values they imposed on their own families? Were they patronizing or condescending when they assumed that the poor had the ability and the will to act upon those values? Were they small-minded or mean-spirited when they upheld a single standard of values for all classes rather than the double standard that had prevailed for so long—a double standard, incidentally, implicit in the social-control thesis? So far from keeping the working class in a condition of inferiority and subservience, that single standard was an invitation to economic improvement and social mobility. It implied that there were not "two nations" but one, united by a single ethos, a common morality. Whatever class differences there were—and they were considerable—they were just that: class differences, economic and social differences, not fundamental moral differences, not differences of character or nature or spirit.

THERE is, as it happens, a fascinating document, written exactly a hundred years ago, testifying to the values of one group of Victorian workers. If that group is not typical of all workers, the document itself is typical in revealing the values of an eminently Victorian reformer and commentator. The author of the document, I must confess, is not one of my favorite eminent Victorians. Beatrice Webb was not, in fact, so much a reformer as a "social engineer," exhibiting all the disagreeable traits of that species: she was officious, presumptuous, humorless, ruthless. Early in his career, Winston Churchill, rejecting an offer to head the Local Government Board, explained that he did not want to be "shut up in a soup-kitchen" with Mrs. Webb—a sentiment one can well understand. Yet she produced some memorable works, one of them written before she became Mrs. Webb—that is, before she married Sidney Webb, joined the Fabian Society, and proceeded to hector people like Churchill. She was Beatrice Potter then, serving her "apprenticeship," as she called it, in the craft of social research by assisting Charles Booth prepare his mammoth survey of the *Life and Labor of the People of London*. The first volume of that work, published in 1889, contains a fascinating chapter by Beatrice Webb (I shall call her by that familiar name although she was not yet married) on the Jewish community in the East End of London.

Some historians have accused Beatrice Webb of being anti-Semitic.* I have never seen persuasive evidence of this, although she was certainly, later in life, anti-Zionist, as so many socialists were, including her husband. In any case, her essay on the Jewish community in East London is anything but anti-Semitic. Written at a time when the Jews of the East End were popularly identified with "sweated labor" (both as workers and as employers), and when there were vociferous demands to limit or prohibit their immigration and even to expel them, the essay was distinctly philo-Semitic. It is a remarkable document, remarkable not only for its account of the practices and beliefs, the manners and morals, of this generation of immigrant Jews, but also for its revelation of the attitudes and values of at least one shrewd and unsentimental English observer.

The essay opens with a brief historical account of the several waves of Jewish immigrants who came to England in modern times—most recently from Poland and Russia. It describes the institu-

* It has also been said that she herself was, or believed herself to be, one-quarter Jewish; but this is highly speculative, derived from the fantasies of a grandmother who, when she was released from a lunatic asylum, took upon herself the mission of leading the Jews back to Jerusalem, and got as far as Paris before she was rescued by her family. There may be an allusion to this in a letter written by Beatrice Webb while she was preparing her essay on the Jewish community. She had been meeting with Jews "of all classes," she said, "and on the whole I like and respect them—I almost think I have a *true* feeling for them."

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tions devised by them to provide for their religious and communal needs: the Board of Deputies that was recognized by the government as the official representative body, the Beth Din that administered religious law, the Board of Guardians that coordinated relief and social services, and the synagogues that catered to the various classes of Jews of varying religious practices and commitments. It is a notably sympathetic account of the difficult circumstances under which the Jews came to England and of the community they created in that alien land.

If there are expressions in that account which a sensitive reader might interpret as snide or disparaging, it is because the reader is unfamiliar with Beatrice Webb's own values and rhetoric. When she commended, for example, the Jewish Board of Deputies for "the skill, the tenacity, and above all, the admirable temper with which our Hebrew fellow-countrymen have insinuated themselves into the life of the nation, without forsaking the faith of their forefathers or sacrificing as a community the purity of their race," there is nothing suspect in the term "purity of their race." To Mrs. Webb, as to most Victorians, "race" was an innocent word and "purity of race" an admirable ideal. Nor was the word "insinuated" meant to be pejorative; the Fabians commonly used that word to describe their own political strategy. "I could insinuate myself," Beatrice Webb once boasted, "into smoking-rooms, business offices, private and public conferences, without rousing suspicion." After a moving description of the Polish Jew who "suffers oppression and bears ridicule with imperturbable good humor" and remains silent in "the face of insult and abuse," she put the rhetorical questions: "For why resent when your object is to overcome? Why bluster and fight when you may manipulate or control in secret?" These last sentences have been cited as "clearly anti-Semitic," in suggesting something like a Jewish conspiracy against Western society. But this was not at all Mrs. Webb's intention. In fact she was praising, not disparaging the Jew. For this too was the conscious policy of the Fabians: to "overcome" by quiet persistence, to "manipulate or control in secret."

Beatrice Webb herself had a strong religious streak, so it is not surprising to find her appreciative of Judaism—all the more because she saw Judaism as her kind of religion, a preeminently this-worldly religion. The strength of the Jewish religion, she said, was that it provided "a law of life on this earth, sanctioned by the rewards and punishments of this world." The Beth Din, for example, adjudicated not only questions of *kashruth* but also family quarrels, trade and labor disputes, breach-of-promise suits, and the myriad issues that arose in "everyday life."

Thus too the local community organization, or Chevrah (she used that word to describe both the group and its meeting place), was part synagogue, part school, part social center, part benefit club assisting its members in times of sickness or death. She described the efforts of some well-intentioned leaders of the Anglo-Jewish establishment to replace the small, overcrowded, unsanitary Chevrahs by a single grand synagogue, and was pleased to report that wiser counsels prevailed and the idea was abandoned. Sanitation and crowding were relative matters, she observed, and in this case the smallness and closeness of the Chevrahs were more virtues than vices. For they were "self-creating, self-supporting, and self-governing communities; small enough to generate public opinion and the practical supervision of private morals, and large enough to stimulate charity, worship, and study by communion and example."

There was a still poorer class of Jews, she pointed out, who did not belong to any Chevrah but who nevertheless clung "with an almost superstitious tenacity to the habits and customs of their race." Although the class itself was permanent, the individuals comprising it were in a constant state of flux, the older immigrants rising out of it while newer immigrants were entering it. But even this lowest class was not without resources, for it was "united to the Jewish middle and upper class by a downward stream of charity and personal service, a benevolence at once so widespread and so thoroughgoing, that it fully justifies the saying, 'All Israel are brethren.'"

Jewish benevolence was also of a special kind. The Jewish "Free School," she said, was the largest school of its kind in all of England, "a striking example of the admirable organization peculiar to Jewish charity." And the Jewish Board of Guardians was unlike any of the other Boards of Guardians which supervised the distribution of public relief. Privately organized and financed, it raised £ 13-14,000 annually, of which only £ 2,000 was given in the familiar form of poor relief—money or vouchers for the purchase of coal, clothes, or other necessities. Smaller sums went for emigration, sanitary inspection, special workrooms for girls, and the like. And well over half was given to individuals for trade and business, most of it in the form of capital. The intention was to enable the recipients to become self-supporting, and the success of this policy was such that of the 3,313 cases dealt with by the Board in 1887, only 268 had previously been applicants. Thus there was not in the Jewish community, Mrs. Webb observed, as there was in England at large, a "chronically parasitic class of 'paupers.'" Either because of "the character of those who take" or "the method of those who give," Jewish charity did not have the demoralizing effects that relief had on the rest of the population.

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"Every country," Beatrice Webb cited the familiar saying (it was apparently familiar a century ago), "has the Jew it deserves." In the case of England, she maintained, this was patently untrue, for England received its most recent contingent of Jews "ready-made" from a country diametrically different from itself. Because one could not understand the peculiarities of English Jews without knowing something of the country they came from, Mrs. Webb interrupted her account of the English Jewish community to describe the conditions in Russia, where "oppression and restriction have assumed every conceivable form." There no Jew could own land or, often, rent it; in one place he could not enter a profession, in another could not establish a business, in still others, he had no right of domicile; and everywhere he was subject to religious and social persecution, living "in daily terror of the petty tyranny of a capricious governor." Yet in spite of this "systematic oppression," the Jews multiplied and prospered in every trade and profession open to them. Even the penal laws were ineffectual against the "superior mental equipment" of the Jews, driving them into "low channels of parasitic activity," where they survived sometimes to the detriment of their "Christian fellow-subjects." Finally, the Russian government changed its tactics and deliberately encouraged "mob violence of a brutal and revolting character" as a means of expulsion.

It was this history of oppression and persecution, described with brutal candor but also compassion, that Beatrice Webb saw as the formative experience of the latest generation of Jewish immigrants. Their adversities were the source of their virtues. "Social isolation has perfected home life; persecution has intensified religious fervor; an existence of unremitting toil, and rigid observance of the moral precepts and sanitary and dietary regulations of the Jewish religion have favored the growth of sobriety, personal purity, and a consequent power of physical endurance." Having lived among a half-civilized people and been deprived of a secular education, they focused all their thoughts and feelings in the literature of their race, "in the Old Testament, with its magnificent promises of universal dominion; in the Talmud, with its minute instructions as to the means of gaining it." The child on its mother's lap lisped passages from the Talmud; the old man tottering to his grave still sought in it the secret of existence. The Talmud, Mrs. Webb quoted a Jewish authority of the time, was "an encyclopaedia of law, civil and penal, ecclesiastical and international, human and divine"—in effect, a Jewish *Corpus Juris*. Beyond that law, "the pious Israelite recognizes no obligations; the laws and customs of the Christians are so many regulations to be obeyed, evaded, set at naught, or used according to the possibilities and expediencies of the hour."

It is curious to find this mixture of idealized romanticism—the child on its mother's lap (surely it should be its father's) lisping portions of the Talmud—and plain-spoken realism—Christian laws to be obeyed or evaded as expediency dictated. To Mrs. Webb they were opposite sides of the same coin: the same circumstances that made the Jews so meticulous in the observance of their own laws, customs, and obligations made them less than respectful of the laws, customs, and obligations of Christian societies, where they had managed to survive a long history of persecution only by a strategy of obedience, evasion, or violation. She hastened to add that she was speaking only of the recent immigrants who were fresh from those foreign experiences, not of the older Jewish community which had long enjoyed "the freedom, the culture, and the public spirit of English life."

The process of acculturation, as she described it, was rapid. The "greenest" of the immigrants eked out a bare existence either from the charity of co-religionists or by working day and night for a small contractor in return for a place to sleep and a loaf of bread. After a few weeks or months, having learned a trade, the worker found a job where he received some pittance of pay. Within a year he joined a Chevrah, and, if he managed to resist the "Jewish passion for gambling," he was on his way to becoming a petty trader or a "tiny capitalist," earning a living by his own labor and by that of a few employees. He then found lodging in a "model dwelling" (a privately financed housing project) where he and his family lived comfortably and decently. At this point Mrs. Webb's picture verges on the the idyllic. "He treats his wife with courtesy and tenderness, and they discuss constantly the future of the children." He never goes to a public house, although he does sometimes enjoy a glass of rum and a game of cards with friends. "In short, he has become a law-abiding and self-respecting citizen of our great metropolis, and feels himself the equal of a Montefiore or a Rothschild."

This achievement was all the greater, according to Mrs. Webb, because it was in stark contrast to the "drunkenness, immorality, and gambling" that infected the East End. Set in the midst of the "very refuse of our civilization," the Jewish workers moved upward and onward, leaving to others the poorest jobs, the worst workshops, the dirtiest lodgings. Why was it, Mrs. Webb asked, that they were so successful? And why was that success so resented by the Christians with whom they came into contact?

Above all what distinguished the Jewish immigrant from the English laborer—I must emphasize that this is Beatrice Webb speaking, not I—was his intellect. "The poorest Jew has inherited through the medium of his religion a trained intellect." Unlike Christian nations with their sharp class distinctions, "the children of Israel are

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a nation of priests." From earliest childhood a Jew has been taught the rites and ceremonies, the laws and poetry, of his people; he has learned to master an ancient tongue and comprehend the subtleties and "fantasies" of the Talmud. He was not, to be sure, "cultured," in the sense of having a wide knowledge and appreciation of the cultural experiences of others; on the contrary, his focus was entirely on the past and present of his own race. But his intellectual faculties—memory, reason, calculation—were highly cultivated. This was true among all classes of Jews, with the result that there was a striking equality among them, a uniformly high, if narrow, level of intellectual training. And these intellectual accomplishments, originating in their religious training, were intensified by a process of natural selection, the long history of persecution having the effect of weeding out the less competent and the less intelligent. Thus the Jewish workers in the East End were a "race of brain-workers" in contrast to the non-Jews who were "manual laborers." For Jews, manual labor was "the first rung of the social ladder, to be superseded or supplanted on the first opportunity by the estimates of the profit-maker, the transactions of the dealer, or the calulations of the money lender"—provided, of course, that they did not fall prey to that "vice of the intellect," gambling.

Their intellectual superiority, Mrs. Webb explained, was only one factor contributing to their success. More important was the "moral and physical regimen" which every pious Jew, male and female, was subjected to from birth—a regimen that "favors the full development of the bodily organs, protects them from abuse and disease, and stimulates the growth of physical self-control and mental endurance." Unlike Christianity or Buddhism, which seek spiritual exaltation through the mortification of the flesh, the religious and dietary laws of Judaism "accentuate the physical aspect of life"; they are intended not as a preparation for another world but as a "course of training adapted to prolong the life of the individual and to multiply the number of his descendants." This moral discipline was naturally centered on the family; it prescribed obedience toward parents, devotion to children, chastity for the girl, and support and protection for the wife. Thus the religious Jew was "a being at once moral and sensual; a creature endowed with the power of physical endurance, but gifted with a highly-trained and well-regulated appetite for sensuous enjoyment."

It was this combination, then, of intellectual aptitude, moral rectitude, and physical stamina that accounted for the Jew's success. And it was the fact of his success that exposed him to oppression and ridicule, insult and injury, all of which he endured with "imperturbable good humor." Unfettered by any fixed standard of living, he adjusted readily to opportunity; he was neither "depressed by penury" nor "demoralized by gain." Unmoved by the passions that led to drink or crime, by the humors that came from "unsatisfied emotions," he could pursue his purposes without distraction or despair. "Is it surprising," Mrs. Webb concluded, "that in this 19th century, with its ideal of physical health, intellectual acquisition, and material prosperity, the chosen people, with three thousand years of training, should in some instances realize the promise made by Moses to their forefathers: 'Thou shalt drive out nations mightier than thyself, and thou shalt take their land as an inheritance'?"

THAT rhetorical question would seem to be sufficient answer both to Beatrice Webb's first question—Why was the immigrant Jew so successful?—and to her second—Why was that success so resented by others? But she went on to propose another reason for that resentment. The immigrant Jew, it appeared, for all his virtues, was deficient in "that highest and latest development of human sentiment—social morality." She hastily explained that she did not mean that the Jews violated the laws and conventions of either social or commercial life. On the contrary, they were among the most law-abiding inhabitants of the East End. "They keep the peace, they pay their debts, and they abide by their contracts; practices in which they are undoubtedly superior to the English and Irish casual laborers among whom they dwell." And they did so for good reason, because they knew that "'law and order' and the 'sanctity of contract' are the *sine qua non* of a full and free competition in the open market," and that they themselves could succeed "by competition, and by competition alone." (Her father, she wrote in her autobiography, "believed in the Jewish maxim— a maxim he often cited—that a bargain is not a good bargain unless it pays both sides.")

But while the foreign Jew, she said (presumably in contrast to the native-born, acculturated Jew), observed the law and the sanctity of contract, he was unrestrained by considerations of personal dignity, class loyalty, or trade integrity. The small manufacturer often rose to the rank of capitalist by bad and dishonest production; the petty dealer or money-lender, intent upon buying cheap and selling dear, took advantage of the weaknesses of his customers; the worker, trying to become a small master, was prepared to underbid his fellow workers. "In short, the foreign Jew totally ignores all social obligations other than keeping the law of the land, the maintenance of his own family, and the charitable relief of co-religionists."

It was a subtle point Mrs. Webb was making, for within the same paragraph she described the immigrants as scrupulous in obeying the law and abiding by contracts, knowing these to be the conditions of a free, open, and competitive economy—and thus of their own success. Yet a few

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sentences later she charged them with producing inferior goods, taking advantage of their customers, and ignoring "all social obligations." These social, as distinct from legal, obligations were obviously meant to signify a more sophisticated, civilized order of obligation, one that came more naturally to Englishmen than to foreigners, especially foreigners whose survival had not allowed them the luxury of such niceties. It was this distinction that Maurice Samuel was to describe so poignantly in his book, *The Gentleman and the Jew*, which drew upon his own experiences as an immigrant trying to accommodate to English society. (Samuel came to England as a child from Rumania only a dozen years after Beatrice Webb wrote her essay.)

No one has ever mistaken an East European immigrant Jew for an English gentleman. What is interesting about Mrs. Webb's account is not so much the failure of the Jew to reach that highest level of "social morality" characteristic of the gentlemanly ethos, as his success in reaching the not inconsiderable level of personal and communal morality that she associated with the Jewish ethos. What is also interesting is her identification of that Jewish ethos with the ethos of capitalism. The final paragraph of her essay makes the point explicitly and dramatically:

> Thus the immigrant Jew, fresh from the sorrowful experiences typical of the history of his race, seems to justify by his existence those strange assumptions which figured for *man* in the political economy of [David] Ricardo—an Always Enlightened Selfishness [these last words capitalized], seeking employment or profit with an absolute mobility of body and mind, without pride, without preference, without interests outside the struggle for the existence and welfare of the individual and the family.

THE Jew as "economic man"—*homo economicus*. Where have we heard that before? From Marx, for one, whose essay "On the Jewish Question," published in 1844, has had more echoes in the socialist movement than some socialists would like to think. There has been much controversy about whether that essay is anti-Semitic or simply anti-capitalist; but since Marx equates the Jew with the capitalist—not accidentally or circumstantially but metaphysically and religiously—the distinction is academic. Would we be arguing that question today if posters appeared, in the Soviet Union let us say, bearing the following message:

> Money is the jealous god of Israel before whom no other god may exist. . . . The god of the Jews has been secularized and has become the god of the world. The bill of exchange is the Jew's actual god. . . . What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Bargaining. What is his worldly god? Money. Very well! Emancipation from bargaining and money, and thus from practical and real Judaism would be the self-emancipation of our era.

It is interesting to compare Marx and Beatrice Webb on this subject. Both portray the Jew as "economic man"—but how different the image is in the two cases. Mrs. Webb was, if not a full-fledged socialist, then at least an incipient socialist. But she was a *Victorian* socialist, and at this time a Victorian more than a socialist. It was the Victorian in her that responded favorably to those values—hard work, thrift, intelligence, sobriety, fidelity, self-reliance, self-discipline, devotion to family, loyalty to community, respect for law—which she saw as conducive to economic and social improvement and to a decent, moral existence.* Her economic man, the economic man she identified with the Jew, exemplified an "Always Enlightened Selfishness"—enlightened because his "selfishness" embraced his family and community (he took upon himself, for example, the care of the poorer members of his community), and because it promoted values that were not only in his self-interest but also good in themselves.

There was, by contrast, nothing "enlightened" about Marx's economic man. The key word Marx used to describe him was "alienated": the Jew was dominated by an "alien essence"; his religion was a fraud and an illusion: his only god was money and the bill of exchange. As for his much vaunted family life—the wife, for example, whom Mrs. Webb depicted as loved, protected, and respected—according to Marx that wife was nothing more than an "object of commerce," a woman to be "bought and sold."

If Beatrice Webb's portrait of the Jew-*qua*-economic man is so different from Marx's, it is not only because she was a Victorian—thus almost by definition a moralist—but also because she was deeply religious. One of the great tragedies of her life was that she was never able to reconcile religion and socialism: the religion that she believed to be the metaphysical and emotional mainstay of life, the end and purpose of existence; and the socialism that she saw as the science of social engineering, the rational means of reforming and reorganizing society for the greatest good of all. But whatever her failure to reconcile the two, her own sense of religiosity was deep and enduring. She regularly prayed at home and less regularly, but often enough, attended services and took communion at St. Paul's. Thus she could respect, even admire, the Jew who also prayed, attended serv-

* There was one ambivalent note in all of this. The socialist-to-be could not resist pointing out that the "Hebrew economist" who promoted this image of economic man also doomed most "manual workers" to a "bare subsistence wage"; the allusion, of course, is to Ricardo's "iron law of wages." Socialists commonly cited Ricardo as the archetypical political economist, rather than Adam Smith, who did not subscribe to the iron law of wages, but who believed, on the contrary, that the wages of even the lowest class would rise in an expanding economy.

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ices, and observed the laws and rites of his religion. Religion was no "illusion" to her—not her own religion or anyone else's.

She also appreciated, as even a great many non-believing Victorians did, the relationship between religion and morality. Valuing morality as highly as the Victorians did—valuing it even, as I have said, when they violated it—they welcomed any support for morality. And traditionally the strongest support, the ultimate sanction, came from religion. For Mrs. Webb, Judaism was an especially effective instrument of morality because it was a this-worldly religion. In this sense Judaism transcended the duality that she found so disturbing in her own life, the duality between religion and socialism, between ultimate ends and proximate means. In Judaism, as she saw it, there was no such dichotomy. Life was all of a piece—ritual and law, individual and community, personal salvation and social obligation, moral conduct and economic advancement.

I MUST repeat that this is Beatrice Webb, not myself, describing the Jewish immigrant community in England a century ago. I do not know how credible her account is. I have no reason *not* to credit it, although I am suspicious of some of her more effusive statements and sweeping generalizations. There were surely Jews who were drunkards as well as gamblers (the only vice she allowed them), who abandoned their wives and children, who did not support their poorer brethren, who never rose above the lower rungs of the economic ladder, who were not notably intelligent, or moral, or successful. (There were also, as she must have known, Jews for whom success was an invitation to cease being Jews.) But these, by all accounts, constituted a relatively small number of the Jewish immigrants—and a still smaller number relative to the non-Jewish laborers of the East End. And even these Jewish deviants, so to speak, did not challenge the ethos; they only violated it, from weakness of character or misfortunes of circumstance.

But whether and to what extent the Jews actually conformed to the ethos Mrs. Webb attributed to them, there is little doubt of the nature of that ethos or of her own esteem for it. Nor is there any doubt that this is remarkably akin to the ethos Margaret Thatcher has in mind when she calls for a return to "Victorian values." Mrs. Thatcher would not like to be compared with Mrs. Webb—and with good reason. I myself find it odd to be writing of Mrs. Webb as warmly as I am now doing. But whatever other reservations I may have about her, I do appreciate (as the Anglo-Jewish press did at the time) her sympathetic portrait of Jewish immigrants in an alien country, stoically, courageously coping with poverty and adversity. And I appreciate even more her sympathetic account of the ethic that governed their behavior and the religion that inspired that ethic.

That ethic is more familiar to us today under the label of the Protestant or Puritan ethic. When Max Weber popularized these terms in 1904, in the first of his essays later published under the title *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he mentioned Judaism only in passing, and only to distinguish between the Judaic ethic which encouraged a "speculatively oriented adventurous capitalism," and the Puritan ethic which was the source of the more rational "bourgeois capitalistic ethic." Seven years later Werner Sombart described essentially the same ethic, this time attributing it to the Jews, in his provocative book, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*. By now the subject has become one of those staples of controversy that transforms normally phlegmatic historians into passionate partisans. The terms of the debate shift and blur, Protestantism mutating into Calvinism, Calvinism into Puritanism, Puritanism into Judaism, Judaism into the Judaic-Christian tradition. And the relation between the terms changes: sometimes it is the religious ethos that is thought to inspire capitalism, sometimes capitalism that is presumed to determine the religious ethos, sometimes a secular ethos that is said to shape both religion and capitalism.

I do not propose to enter into any of these controversies. Certainly I would not say, as Sombart did, that "Puritanism *is* Judaism," or, as Weber is sometimes accused of saying, that the Protestant ethic *caused* the rise of capitalism. Nor would I venture any opinion on whether the Judaic ethic derived primarily from Mosaic and talmudic law or from the historical experience of the Jews. For my purposes here, what is interesting about the ethos of this Jewish community in the 1880's is its relation to the Victorian ethos, and this, in turn, to the capitalist ethos.

It is ironic that this study of the Jews should have been written by a woman who was even then sympathetic to socialism and who, after she became a committed socialist, continued to cherish the values—capitalist values, as she herself recognized—she had found among those poor Jewish immigrants. It is as if she wanted to superimpose those values upon socialism itself; as if the values that make for a successful, and ethical, capitalism are also required for a successful, and ethical, socialism. The very idea, of course, is self-contradictory. An ethic of "Always Enlightened Selfishness" predicates, as Ricardo said, "an absolute mobility of body and mind." It is a free, competitive, acquisitive ethic, placing no limits (apart from those set by law and religion) upon the exertions or sacrifices an individual chooses to make or the commensurate rewards he expects to receive. It encourages workers to earn as much as they are capable of earning, to save as much of their earnings as they think proper, to invest their savings in enterprises they hope will be profitable, to reap the profits of those enterprises and pass them on to their families, and to discharge their

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communal responsibilities in accord with their religious precepts and voluntary desires. Such an ethic is hardly compatible with the kind of planned, controlled, regulated—regimented, an unfriendly critic might call it—society that was the avowed aim of Fabian socialism (to say nothing of Marxism).

Mrs. Thatcher has no such problem. Her Victorian values are entirely compatible with capitalism as she envisages it—and with the Jewish ethos as Beatrice Webb described it. When Mrs. Thatcher wants to epitomize those values, she cites the famous sermon by John Wesley on "The Use of Money"—delivered, incidentally, before his almost entirely working-class flock. "Gain all you can," he exhorted them. "Save all you can. Give all you can." That is pretty close to the ethic Beatrice Webb ascribed to the Jews—including the last part of that trinity, "Give all you can."

IT MAY BE said that this is not an exalted or heroic ethic. That is certainly true. But those of us who have had some experience of exalted and heroic ethics may be reassured by the modesty of this one. A philosophy of "Always Enlightened Selfishness" does not sound as inspiring as a philosophy of "Always Altruistic Socialism," but it turns out to be a good deal more humane in practice. One is no longer surprised at the failure of socialistic experiments; one would not be terribly distressed if they *merely* failed. What *is* distressing is the fact that all too often they succeed all too well— succeed in establishing and perpetuating a regime which is anything but altruistic, which is, in fact, oppressive and tyrannical.

A regime based upon the ethic of "Enlightened Selfishness" has the undeniable advantages of producing a more efficient and prosperous economy and a freer polity and society. It is also, I would venture to say, more genuinely (as distinct from rhetorically) moral, because it requires no violation or transformation of human nature. It takes people as they are and as they always have been, as human beings capable of being enlightened as well as selfish—enlightened precisely because they are selfish, because their "self" (properly understood, as Tocqueville would say) naturally embraces family and community, religion and tradition, interests and values.

If this is a capitalist ethos, it is also a democratic ethos. Those modest, mundane, lowly virtues—hard work, sobriety, frugality, foresight—are within the capacity of everyone. They do not assume any special breeding, or social status, or talent, or valor, or grace—or even money. They are common virtues within the reach of common people. They are preeminiently democratic virtues.

They are also (in the old sense of that term) liberal virtues. By putting a premium on ordinary virtues attainable by ordinary people, the ethos locates responsibility and authority within each individual. In an aristocratic age, only the exceptional, heroic individual was seen as a free moral agent, the master of his fate. Now all individuals are assumed to be free moral agents, hence their own masters. It is no accident that the Victorian ethos put such a premium on the self: self-interest, self-help, self-control, self-reliance, self-respect, self-discipline. A liberal society, the Victorians believed, requires a moral citizenry. The more effective the voluntary exercise of morality on the part of each indidvidual, the more internalized that morality, the less need there is for the external, coercive instruments of the state. Just as law, in a civilized society, is a substitute for force, so morality is a surrogate for authority.

Yesterday's liberalism is today's conservatism. Today it is Mrs. Thatcher, the leader of the Conservative party, who has reaffirmed those Victorian values in the name, as she told the elders of the Church of Scotland, of the "Judaic-Christian tradition." Recalling Mrs. Webb's account of the Jewish community, we may be forgiven for thinking that those Victorian values are perhaps more Judaic than Christian.

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Life Under Communism Today

Arch Puddington

THE 1988 Olympics held in Seoul, South Korea, went down in history as yet another triumph for the Communist world. As anticipated, the Soviet Union walked off with the largest number of medals, and while Soviet dominance was not quite so pronounced as in previous years, much of the slack was taken up by athletes from Soviet-bloc nations in Eastern Europe. East Germany's runner-up showing was especially impressive, given that nation's small population, but Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary also finished among the top ten overall medal winners, and each gave evidence of strength in a surprising variety of events.

In the past, the socialist camp's Olympic conquests were regarded—both within and outside the Soviet bloc—as a potent symbol of Communism's achievements. Soviet athletes seemed like adjuncts of the Red Army—confident, disciplined, unemotional, not prone to the sloppiness which has occasionally marred American performances. Yet while the standard of excellence in Seoul in every way equaled past performances, the impression of an invincible, totalitarian juggernaut was missing. There was, in fact, something a bit grotesque about the magnificent accomplishments of athletes representing nations which, in practically every other sphere, are in various stages of decline. Instead of an advertisement for Communism's strengths, the Olympics could well be seen as a prime example of Communism's warped priorities, for here are countries that under state direction churn out world-class runners and gymnasts while the rest of their society experiences steady, and sometimes precipitous, decay.

Although Communism's economic difficulties have been frequently commented on, it is only in the past several years that something approaching an honest accounting has been given wide publicity. To the policy of *glasnost*, of course, must go much of the credit for expanding our understanding of Communism's systemic failures. Embarrassing Soviet health statistics were once camouflaged or omitted; now they are published, and no less a figure than the Minister of Health has issued a scathing analysis of the shortcomings of the Soviet system of health care. In Poland, the "propaganda of success" which predominated under former party chief Edward Gierek has been replaced by gloomy accounts of across-the-board crisis, whether the subject be housing, the environment, the hospital system, or the restructuring of industry. Even Czechoslovakia, where hard-line party leaders until recently sidestepped economic change, has begun to acknowledge the system's inadequacies.

The attitude of candor taken up by Communist officials and media has had a ripple effect on Western reporters and scholars. Under Brezhnev, journalistic scrutiny concentrated on rumors of leadership changes and the persecution of dissidents and Jews. Reporters tended not to delve too deeply into the dark corners of Soviet society—largely because they were denied access to ordinary citizens and because overzealous investigative work invited expulsion. As for academic researchers, those specializing in Communist economic and social-welfare questions appeared more intent on building a case for enhanced symmetry between Communism and democracy than on analyzing whether the system worked. But with *glasnost* and the example of the emboldened Soviet media, cautiousness and self-censorship have given way to unprecedented aggressiveness, as Western reporters take advantage of access to officials, workers, collective farmers, economists, black marketeers, advocates of nationality causes, and religious believers to assemble unsparing assessments of internal conditions. Perhaps the most important consequence of journalistic boldness has been widespread Western doubt over the ultimate fate of *perestroika*, a skepticism cultivated by innumerable press accounts concluding that the measures advanced by Gorbachev are inadequate and that many Soviet citizens, workers most notably, are strenuously resisting the new course.

Another source of information which deserves mention is the unofficial or independent media of the Communist world. The word "unofficial" is used deliberately, for the independent press of today occupies a different role from the "under-

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ground" or *samizdat* press of the 1970's. Basically, where the latter was subject to unrelenting persecution, the former is tolerated in greater or lesser degrees in Poland, Hungary, and even Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. As for content, unofficial journals devote far more attention than in the past to Communism's socioeconomic predicament. Their coverage, not surprisingly, is marked by a willingness to challenge the foundations of the socialist system, and is also notable for the talent displayed by the independent-minded experts who do not hesitate to advance far-reaching critiques of the failure of state socialism.

Interestingly, it is Communist officials, and not their antagonists from the opposition, who often seem the most pessimistic about the prospects for change. Yet this is not as surprising as it might seem, since these officials are privy to the most accurate information and have the daunting assignment of dealing with the emerging crisis within the framework of the prevailing order. By every reliable reckoning, they face an alarming dilemma. It has often been noted that the impetus for *perestroika* was a growing fear that the Soviet economy could compete neither with the advanced capitalist democracies nor with the industrializing nations of the Third World. The problem, however, cuts even deeper. The question facing Mikhail Gorbachev and his East European acolytes is not simply whether the Soviet empire can be made competitive with market-oriented societies, but whether a catastrophic erosion of material conditions throughout the Communist world can be forestalled. Indeed, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are already exhibiting disturbing similarities with some of the more crisis-ridden societies of the Third World. The signs include spreading poverty, slums, and homelessness, double- and even triple-digit inflation, declining health-care indicators, high rates of external debt, an uncontrollable black market, pervasive corruption.

PROBABLY the single most troubling sign of deterioration is the decline of health care, a development especially humiliating because of the central position which free medical care has long occupied in Communist propaganda. While Communists might admit that advanced capitalist societies were effective in developing highly specialized (and extremely expensive) surgical techniques, it was at the same time claimed that state socialism performed as well, and possibly better, than democratic nations in delivering services to the masses. To bolster this assertion, Communist regimes could cite a wealth of statistical data showing a massive reduction in mortality rates during the first two decades after World War II. Indeed, according to official (albeit questionable) figures, by the end of the 1950's Soviet citizens enjoyed a higher life expectancy than Americans, and the Soviet infant mortality rate was lower than such European nations as Italy and Austria. At the same time, the Soviets boasted the highest ratio of doctors per person in the world.

Even allowing for the likelihood of statistical cheating, it is obvious that some impressive improvements were registered in a country which had historically lagged well behind the rest of Europe in health indices. Furthermore, the official claims were reinforced by the testimony of Western medical experts, who routinely lauded the high level of care after touring Soviet hospitals and clinics.

The signs of stagnation first appeared during the 1970's. A clear warning signal was the Soviet failure to publish certain health statistics, most importantly those concerning infant mortality. In addition, several Western demographers, including Murray Feshbach and Christopher Davis, pieced together studies from available Soviet data which indicated that the health of Soviet citizens was not just stagnating, but actually declining.* When first published, these findings were greeted with considerable suspicion. They were attacked not only by Soviet sources but by many Western medical authorities, some of whom went so far as to accuse the researchers of exaggerating conclusions to provide ammunition for the cold war. But it is now apparent that these studies were highly accurate; if anything, their conclusions understated the depth of the crisis. Nor can it be any longer claimed that Feshbach, Davis, and the others were motivated by ideology, since the most damning information has issued from none other than the top Soviet and East European health-care officials.

The most authoritative statement to date comes from Dr. Yevgeni Chazov, best-known in the West as a co-chairman of the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War, the organization of doctors which was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1985. In one of his first major personnel moves, Gorbachev installed Chazov as Minister of Health, and Chazov has used this pulpit to issue a series of brutally frank assessments of the woeful condition of Soviet medicine. Among his findings: poor training "has led to a lowering in the level of knowledge of the Soviet doctor"; health-care statistics have been falsified; certain basic medicines are in short supply; one-third of the country's medical-training institutions could be "closed down today with absolutely no problem"; hospitals are seriously overcrowded, and some lack such basic features as running water and sewage systems. In polite bureaucratic language, Chazov has described conditions which would be considered intolerable in a normal society.

* *Social and Economic Rights in the Soviet Bloc*, edited by George Urban (Transaction).

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Furthermore, the decline in the Soviet health-care infrastructure has coincided with an increase in health problems stimulated by such factors as poor diet—marked by high consumption of foods contributing to heart and circulatory ailments—alcoholism, environmental degradation, and unhealthy working conditions. It is, of course, true that such problems are an unfortunate aspect of modern industrial society, and not unique to the Soviet bloc. Yet other countries, even many Third World nations, have been able to cope with them, as demonstrated by steadily improving indicators like infant-mortality rates. By contrast, in the developed countries of the Communist world health indices register stagnation at best, and in a number of cases, outright decline, a trend which the demographer Nicholas Eberstadt has described as "alien to everything we know about modern life."

The most depressing statistic concerns male mortality: in four Soviet-bloc countries—the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland—the death rate for men has at various times actually risen since the 1970's. A slightly less serious decline was recorded in Czechoslovakia, which nonetheless fell from tenth to 22nd on a list of 27 nations in a life-expectancy survey between 1965 and 1985. Czechoslovakia also moved to the top of the list in cancer-related deaths (according to a survey conducted by the United Nations). In Poland, instances of salmonella, influenza, liver infections, and measles have increased; in Western Europe, by contrast, these diseases have steadily decreased, and in some cases virtually disappeared. Tuberculosis has also risen in Poland, to a level eight times that of Denmark. As for infant mortality, recent statements by Soviet officials rank their country 50th in the world, the worst of any developed nation.

The plight of Polish medicine is the most poignant. Both official and independent media have recounted stories of unsanitary hospitals; frequent drunkenness among orderlies, ambulance drivers, and other personnel; a shocking shortage of basic medicines. Because of a lack of sufficient beds, pregnant women are often required to undergo labor sitting in chairs, and to give birth on hospital trolleys. At a hospital in Lublin, patients were admitted only if they brought their own beds and there are shortages of such basic medicines as aspirin, penicillin, anesthetics, and drugs to treat cancer and heart disease. Compounding the crisis are shortages of such ordinary hygienic items as toilet paper, toothpaste, and detergent; infectious diseases like hepatitis have risen owing to the lack of clean drinking water, caused by an almost total neglect of widespread water pollution.

As the quality of medical treatment declines throughout the Soviet bloc, access to decent care is increasingly determined by class and privilege. The most expert and comfortable care is reserved for the party elites and, in some countries, those with hard currency. Below this level are those able and willing to pay "gratuities" to doctors and nurses to ensure proper attention. In practically every Communist country, doctors are vastly underpaid, often earning less than semi-skilled industrial workers. In Poland, for example, a pediatrician may earn a base salary one-third that of a skilled mechanic. To supplement their low earnings, doctors have come to expect bribes, whether in the form of money or, as is often the case in the Soviet Union, food. Through this system of institutionalized corruption, some doctors manage to earn several times their base salary. On the other hand, those medical personnel who do not come into direct contact with patients are deprived of the opportunity for extra earnings, a source of considerable resentment.

At the bottom are those who refuse to pay bribes, those who are too poor, and, especially, the elderly. The plight of the elderly is, in fact, perhaps the greatest scandal of the Communist social system. Old people are looked on as a burden to the rest of society; in the Soviet view, as described by the dissident psychiatrist Anatoly Koryagin, "Man . . . is valuable only to the extent that he is of advantage to society." As "unproductive" citizens, pensioners are treated with arrant contempt by Soviet-bloc medical authorities. The most blatant case of discrimination is the Rumanian practice of refusing ambulance service to those over the age of seventy. Soviet policy is but slightly better; in some cities, ambulances are sent for the elderly only after younger patients have been picked up. Furthermore, old people with serious diseases are often sent away by hospital officials. Asked why elderly people with cancer were not admitted to a Budapest hospital, the chief physician replied: "If we admitted all such patients, we would have no room for those who can be cured."

Two other groups whose special medical problems can be traced in part to the peculiarities of the Soviet system are the handicapped and women. The major problem for the handicapped is obtaining wheelchairs, prostheses, and similar devices which are routinely supplied in most other countries. Here is the testimony of a man who works in an Odessa prosthesis factory:

> It is a huge place and the atmosphere there is awful. People have to wait from two to four years before receiving their application to come for a fitting. When they come, they're left waiting for months. Hotels in the city are for foreigners, so they sleep at the station in winter and in public gardens in summer and they go without food. They keep pleading to speed up the manufacture of their prostheses and give bribes even though they have no money left for food. They are treated like animals because they

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> form a large crowd and keep pestering the administration with questions nobody can answer. The quality of the prostheses is very low. Models are obsolete, and there are no spare parts. The invalids live hundreds or even thousands of kilometers away, and with a broken prosthesis they can't do anything.

It hardly needs adding that the elites of Soviet society are spared such gruesome conditions. For the privileged, models of artificial limbs are custom-made in Western Europe, and delivered directly to the factory chief. The models are then duplicated in special workshops, and the individual obtaining the prosthesis is fitted in special rooms.

Women also suffer a set of problems of their own, partially attributable to the abnormalities of the Soviet system. As has been amply documented, shortages of contraceptive devices have made abortion one of the principal methods of birth control. Added to the humiliation of multiple abortions are the miserable operating conditions found in most Soviet hospitals, in particular the absence of anesthetics. In a strange twist, many women actually prefer "back-alley" abortions by black-market amateurs who are somehow able to purchase the necessary anesthetics. Another growing health problem is the tendency of relatively young women to suffer serious diseases of the reproductive organs due to years of heavy physical labor in factories, on roads, or in the fields.

While Soviet and East European authorities are owning up to the deficiencies in medical care, they have yet to acknowledge the relationship of these deficiencies to Communism as a social system. Certain problems can of course be ascribed to Brezhnevian stagnation. But decline has not been limited to the Soviet Union; medical care has deteriorated throughout the bloc, from Stalinist Rumania (where babies who die before one month are no longer counted in infant-mortality statistics) to reformist Hungary. Doctors universally suffer from low salaries and low social standing; in a few countries, they are still expected to participate in "voluntary" chores, such as clean-up brigades or harvesting crops. More to the point, a two-decade-long decline in the percentage of national income devoted to the health sector has occurred in practically every Communist country, as more and more resources have been channeled into heavy industry and, in some countries, the military.

Nor are the prospects bright for a near-term turnaround unless there is fundamental change, and not simply a superficial reordering of priorities. Modernization, requiring the importation of Western technology, is limited by a lack of hard currency and by the competing demands of industry and the consumer sector. Doctors are not likely to work harder without financial incentives, which are still resisted for ideological reasons. As for the environmental dimensions of the health crisis, poor diet and alcoholism will lessen only with a general improvement in living standards, which even the most optimistic observers admit is some years away.

A second pillar of the Soviet welfare system is housing. According to the traditional argument, all Soviet citizens are guaranteed adequate housing as a matter of basic human rights; this position has been adopted by the various East European regimes as well. In fact, however, Communism has been unable to provide housing for millions of people, and the existing housing stock is cramped, poorly built, and often lacking such basic features as running water and kitchens.

A Hungarian planning official has described his nation's housing situation as "worse than before, indeed, it is hopeless." *Polityka*, an official Polish journal, describes housing as "hit by an incurable disease." Soviet officials, including Gorbachev, have been as sharp in castigating their housing sector, most notably after it was revealed that the human toll from the Armenian earthquake had been exacerbated by the inferior quality of apartments built during the Brezhnev era. "Hopeless" and "incurable" are words not often employed by Communists to characterize social ills; such defeatism is even more astonishing when applied to highly developed European societies. Yet the conclusion is inescapable: Communism, as a system, has proved unable to provide decent housing for its citizens many decades after its seizure of power in Europe.

Communism, indeed, can also be said to have a truly massive problem of homelessness. Millions of families, while having access to shelter of a sort, do not have homes of their own; they live in crowded quarters with parents, siblings, grandchildren, friends. In Poland, where the problem is most aggravated, some cities have waiting lists of up to thirty years for apartments, and 50 percent of newlyweds are forced to live with their parents, not for economic reasons but simply because sufficient housing does not exist. Some two million Poles, out of a population of about 37 million, lack housing, and given Poland's high fertility rate, the situation can be expected to worsen in the coming years. It is not uncommon for three generations to crowd together in a one-bedroom flat, and many divorced couples continue living together because of the shortage.

The Polish situation is replicated in other East European countries. In Czechoslovakia, 10 percent do not have homes of their own, and one-quarter live in apartments lacking private bathrooms. The waiting period for many Hungarians is ten years. In Rumania, as part of party chief Nicolae Ceausescu's villagization program, thousands of village homes are being systematically destroyed, their inhabitants herded into jerry-built apartment complexes lacking kitchens and running water.

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Another dimension of the Communist housing situation concerns workers' hostels. Millions live in these crude facilities, thrown up near construction sites, mines, and large factories. Although usually called dormitories, workers' hostels are more accurately described as barracks, or modified prison camps. A dentist from the Soviet city of Vladimir, who treated those living in such a hostel, has reported the following:

> Families do not have their own rooms, and there are no separate quarters for men and women. Instead, everyone sleeps together in an area housing 100-150 people, partitioned only with torn blankets hung from the ceiling, or plywood boards. There are lots of dirty, unkempt children running around. The air is thick with screams and obscenities day and night. Prostitution and drunkenness are rife. Generally, there are no toilet facilities, and in winter there are always lumps of frozen excrement to be found on the street below.

The most promising solution to the endemic housing crisis is some form of non-state construction, either through cooperatives, whereby a group of individuals contribute toward the cost of an apartment building, or by private development. Although a number of Communist countries permit private or semi-private construction, the scale has remained unimpressive, and the obstacles daunting.

Obtaining building materials is one of the most formidable challenges. Often in short supply to begin with, such materials are typically assigned to state construction enterprises; private contractors are frequently compelled to go through the black market or simply to steal. Contractors must also get approval from a lengthy list of government agencies, a process which can take years unless bribes are given. Another problem is price. State housing is notoriously inexpensive; cooperatives or private homes may cost a great deal. Ten years ago or so, private housing was more affordable because people in Eastern Europe had more disposable income. Today, however, an average two-income family barely earns enough to scrape by, and there is no extra money for a major expense like a new house.

Thus, in housing as in health care, the prospects for improvement appear bleak. In most Communist countries, the pace of construction has actually declined during the 1980's. Unless the authorities take vigorous action to encourage private construction, the defeatism expressed by those officials who best understand the magnitude of the crisis will turn out to be only too justified.

ANOTHER Communist icon demolished by *glasnost* is the claim to have abolished poverty. As recently as 1986, a Soviet commentator, in an article on the human-rights debate, wrote that in the United States

> . . . there are millions, in some cases tens of millions of people who are permanently or temporarily out of a job, who are forced to live in slums or who have no roof over their heads at all, who are driven with increasing ruthlessness at work, who are discriminated against on account of the color of their skin, sex, or age, whose incomes stay below the official poverty level, who have been unable to receive even an elementary education or medical care they sorely need, who live under conditions of utter lawlessness, . . . corruption, and rising drug abuse. . . .

Such overheated rhetoric, until recently a staple of Soviet commentaries on American society, could easily and accurately be applied to Soviet-style societies, simply on the basis of recent media accounts of these countries' social problems.

Judging the extent of poverty in the Communist world by applying generally accepted Western standards is no simple proposition. Housing conditions alone would qualify many families as impoverished. By the same token, the diets of many Poles, Rumanians, and Soviets fall well short of Western nutritional (although not caloric) standards. Likewise with the widespread absence of such basic amenities as telephones. Are we to call impoverished the two-thirds of Soviet citizens who lack hot water, or the one-third who have no running water altogether? Similarly, poverty among the elderly in the United States is no longer a mass phenomenon thanks to Social Security and its various supplements, Medicare, and private pensions. By contrast, statistics from Communist regimes suggest that there is massive poverty among the elderly, due to the miserly level of pensions and discriminatory policies of health care. Some have estimated that 80 percent of the Soviet elderly can be labeled as living in poverty.

An instructive case is Hungary, long considered a shining example of intelligent socialist economic management. According to recently published figures, somewhere between 15 and 30 percent of the population can now be classified as "socially poor," a category which includes roughly 40 percent of the elderly, one-half of families with two children, and between 70 and 90 percent of families with three or more offspring. Another 25 percent endure living standards which in the United States would be classified as working poor.

Nor are the Hungarian poor necessarily invisible. Press accounts speak of growing numbers of beggars, homeless people, and squatters, the latter consisting of families with children who stream into Budapest from the provinces in search of employment. The problem of declining living standards is expected to worsen, perhaps significantly, because of economic changes introduced by the authorities. The cost of housing, food, utilities—basic necessities which under previous policies were heavily subsidized—is now being allowed to rise to levels approaching market value.

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Hungary has also introduced an income tax, meaning a further general lowering of material conditions. The tax system has had an unusually corrosive effect on the large group of Hungarians who have taken second or even third jobs in a desperate attempt to maintain a decent life. Furthermore, like other Communist countries, Hungary as a matter of ideological principle refused to establish a welfare safety net; now, when it is desperately needed, the country lacks the resources to provide more than the most meager assistance.

While the Hungarian regime is taking steps to overhaul the economy, the pervading mood within the Communist party seems to be one of exhaustion. One of the bluntest assessments of the country's plight was voiced not by an opposition figure but by Gyorgy Aczel, a long-time Politburo member until his recent ouster:

> The great masses feel that . . . they have lost the opportunity of getting ahead. The poor feel that their chance for upward mobility has been lost. Those who possess something feel that they might lose it. People generally cannot live without prospects; this is especially so under socialism, because this society has become identified in people's minds with getting ahead.

The Soviets, too, have begun to address the formerly taboo subject of poverty. Although a precise measurement has yet to be published, a number of researchers have conducted studies suggesting a poverty rate between 20 and 40 percent. The elderly comprise a substantial percentage of this figure, not surprisingly given that the average pension stands at slightly below the poverty line. As in Hungary, large families and families with only one parent make up the bulk of the rest.

If Communism has failed to eliminate the abject destitution which seems, in fact, to be growing throughout Eastern Europe, what about other claims made for the system?

In the past, for example, Communist systems have earned credit for having liberated women from their inferior social and economic status. And, as Nicholas Eberstadt observes in his important new book, *The Poverty of Communism*,* upon coming to power Communist regimes invariably have taken sweeping measures to free women from bride prices and other vestiges of feudalism. Women have been given an equal right to education, and permitted—indeed, practically compelled—to work. But while these initial steps may appear impressive, with the passage of time it is clear that women have continued to occupy a subservient position. They have the crushing double burden of organizing family life while spending their working hours at often physically arduous jobs. Moreover, the professions women have come to dominate—medicine and teaching—have been consciously reduced in status through a wage structure which favors heavy industry. And when it has suited the state's purposes, women have been eased back into their traditional role of child-bearing. The reason for this is simple enough. Sexual equality has never been an end in itself. Rather, as Eberstadt notes, "It has been explicitly pursued as a means to an end; a way of augmenting 'socialist' power, or stimulating 'socialist' construction."

So too with Communism's boast to function as the engineer of social mobility for the toiling masses. At their inception, most Communist regimes have taken far-reaching steps to give workers, and to a lesser degree peasants, an opportunity to move into higher positions. But once political stability has been achieved it becomes increasingly difficult to advance beyond one's status at birth. Over the years, a rigid class system has evolved; mobility has become much more problematical than under capitalism or, for that matter, during pre-Communist times.

From the data he has analyzed, Eberstadt draws an interesting conclusion about the relationship between Communism and poverty. When first installed, the Communist state can be expected to advance policies that benefit the poor through the emancipation of women, industrialization, and affirmative-action programs for workers and peasants. But then the interests and policies of the regime change:

> From the standpoint of the party and those who direct it, social mobility should henceforth be no more rapid than development plans or political struggles necessitate. The importance of women to the class struggle gives way to a recognition of their importance in reproducing the labor force and filling the cracks in manpower plans. The drive to eliminate illiteracy is replaced by a concern with preventing the populace from learning certain things. Marxist-Leninist regimes, in short, have something like a "window of opportunity" in dealing with the problems of the poor; as this window closes, it becomes increasingly difficult to implement policies which stand the disadvantaged in good stead.

The countries of which we are speaking here are, it should be recalled, European societies. As Mikhail Gorbachev often reminds us, the Soviet bloc is part of Europe, sharing cultural bonds that extend back over the centuries. Economically, however, these countries have failed to achieve the level of prosperity which the free nations of Europe have enjoyed in the postwar period; now, it would appear, they are doomed to fall further and further behind their Western neighbors.

It is true that the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe have managed to avoid mass unemployment (although they tolerate millions of useless jobs), and do not suffer the relentless

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destitution found in many Third World countries. But the significant point is the direction Communist economies are headed, and the mounting evidence that a reversal is impossible under the prevailing system.

Nor is the growing resemblance between Communism and the underdeveloped world limited to narrow economic issues. Corruption is coming to be seen as a major problem throughout the bloc. At one level, Communist corruption takes the classic form of highly-placed officials exploiting their positions for personal enrichment. More to the point is corruption linked to the pervasiveness of state economic control. Just as the organization of health care leads to massive, tacitly-sanctioned bribe-taking, a similar pattern can be discerned in the allocation of housing, where influence is routinely used to enable friends and allies to leap to the head of the waiting list. The failure of the state to provide enough consumer goods has triggered the rise of a massive black market; at the same time, legal entrepreneurs find themselves of necessity in the uncomfortable position of employing black-market tactics to overcome the mountain of bureaucratic hurdles thrown up by the system.

Another development with disturbing Third World parallels is mass economic emigration, made possible by relaxed travel regulations instituted by a number of Soviet-bloc countries. It is, however, mainly Poles who have taken advantage of the new rules. The exodus of Poles has been described as the greatest mass movement in Europe since the end of World War II, with some 500,000 having fled since 1983. The most popular destination is West Germany, and many ethnic Poles are sufficiently desperate to claim German origins in order to gain legal residence status. The problem is considered of sufficient magnitude to have elicited complaints of a brain drain from Polish officials, who note that many of the refugees are doctors, engineers, and other professionals. Jerzy Urban, spokesman for the Polish regime, has accused Western governments of "sucking out of Poland some of the achievements of socialism." But as an X-ray technician, newly-arrived in West Germany, has responded: "I am free at least. The golden West. No more food lines. No waits for apartments or cars. No Communism."

In one sense, indeed, Third World societies have a distinct advantage over societies where Communism has been firmly established. An important lesson of the Gorbachev era is that the longer state socialism has been in place, the more difficult the process of reform becomes. Even in Third World countries which have recently fallen under Marxist rule, a relaxation of control has invariably led to an immediate burst of economic energy and a noticeable improvement in material conditions. By contrast, entrenched Communist regimes, having spent years indoctrinating their citizens to the presumed benefits of huge state industries and farms, having sworn a solemn pledge of lifetime economic stability for all citizens, and having drummed home the message that profit is evil, are discovering that many have learned their lessons all too well, and view demands for change with suspicion and even hostility.

"Communism," Lech Walesa recently lamented, "has made us the beggars of Europe." The real dilemma facing Poland and the rest of the Soviet bloc is that, having failed, failed, and failed again, the same Communist authorities who created the current crisis continue to insist that only they have the right to political power. This argument, backed up by the threat of force, was grudgingly tolerated so long as the promise of ever-expanding material abundance could be even half-heartedly believed. With the rulers themselves now admitting that they have been unable to meet their part of the social bargain, how long can the ruled continue to accept a system which no longer pretends to provide either freedom or prosperity?

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The Professor and the L-Word

Midge Decter

PEOPLE acquainted with him in the ordinary way would have said without hesitation that he was a man of moderate, agreeable temperament. Those who knew him more intimately would probably have been conscious of him as a man with a somewhat greater than normal supply of edgy vanity, but usually well enough under control. His considerable eminence as a professor and scholar, author of three very well regarded and even somewhat famous books and warmly welcomed lecturer, had left him feeling on the whole quite content with himself. If he had never become one of those teachers notably regarded with reverence or, on the other hand, great affection by his students, with two or three exceptions over the years they had in turn also failed to make themselves notably important to him. Still, relations between teacher and taught were equable enough to suit all around. He had never been very fond of teaching undergraduates, finding their intellectual shapelessness rather than in any way appealing to be little more than a chore, but his rapid rise in university status had long since relieved him of the need to have much to do with them. On the whole, the very model of a solid liberal academic gentleman.

The one thing that did predictably drive him to unseemly displays of bad temper in public—of the kind with which only his family would be otherwise acquainted—was any sort of unfavorable comment on his work. Over the course of the years, there had not in fact been very many of these, but each had elicited from him what even he in a calmer moment could recognize to be an altogether disproportionate response.

In a loving family joshing way, he was referred to at home as the Renaissance man, as a result of the fact that the subject of his doctoral dissertation had kept him for years, in the view of his children rather boringly, focused on the 15th century. But if not in any sense the kind of polymath usually intended by that term, he was indeed a man of broad cultural interests and refinements. He liked looking at paintings; he had a now somewhat faded acquaintance with 19th-century and early modernist novels, regretting that he found so little time any more for rereading them; he was a passionate opera-goer and had as well, rather late in life, become a balletomane. Not only a liberal academic gentleman but one of high and liberal taste.

In politics, too, he was a man of high leanings. Though he had come of age, electorally speaking, as a passionate supporter of Adlai E. Stevenson and afterward almost always found himself voting for the Democratic presidential candidate—local politics interested him not at all—he never thought of himself as being a member of, or loyal to, any party. He had, for instance, literally wept on election night of 1952, when Adlai went down to defeat before Ike, but discovered in the years following, as any genuinely civilized and intelligent person was bound to do, that he could not sustain any very heated opposition to Eisenhower. As much as it had offended both his mind and spirit to think of Richard Nixon in the vice presidency, and as little edification as there was to be found in the Eisenhowers' relation to the arts and high culture, he would have to admit that his fears had not been realized. The New Deal had not been repealed, the odious Senator McCarthy had been put down, and despite the fulminations of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, it had become clearer and clearer—Hungary, Suez—that Eisenhower would above all keep us out of war. He knew of course that there was a region in the world called Indochina, but as a self-confessed Europeanist paid no attention to it. Had he done so, he would have enthusiastically applauded Eisenhower's decision not to support the French there and thus to hasten the dissolution of yet another no longer viable European empire.

About Communism he had, in those still very much postwar 1950's, mixed feelings. He was horrified, again as any civilized and intelligent person was bound to be, by what Stalin had wrought. Further, he had lent what was known as "critical support" to the Korean war on the ground that Stalin must not be permitted to overturn an agreed-upon status quo. On the other hand, nuclear weapons had altered the very nature of international relations and had thereby made negotiation not only a desirable but an absolutely necessary substitute for the use of force. In any case, Khrushchev had put an end to the terrors of Stalinism, and some day the great, suffering Russian people—how could a lover of the 19th-

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century novel regard them in any other way?—would be returned to a welcoming West.

As for domestic Communists, though he was very far from fond of them—they tended among other things to be so raucous—and had even come oh so reluctantly to grant the possibility of Alger Hiss's guilt, he could not credit the idea that they posed any sort of danger. First of all, there were so few of them: once the breakup of the wartime alliance had dissolved the Popular Front, and Khrushchev's exposure had cut the heart out of so many of Stalin's former defenders, only a handful of bitter die-hards with no real following seemed to remain. In his own immediate experience, the Henry Wallace Progressives active at his university in 1948 had appeared to his admittedly intellectually snobbish view of the world to be such a silly lot of windbags, posturers, and celebrity-hounds, it was no wonder, to him at least, that they garnered fewer than a million votes nationwide. So while he was rather happy not to have them around, particularly in the classroom, where in his own undergraduate days Communist students had made such a nuisance of themselves, he could not maintain any but the most frigid kind of civility toward those perfervid anti-Communists who simply would not give up their old grievances no matter how conditions had changed. But they, too, were an ever dwindling fellowship.

MEANWHILE, if God was perhaps not in His heaven as far as the wide world was concerned, all was certainly right with the academy. The universities were growing richer, larger, newer. As more and more students kept piling into them—the result to begin with of growing affluence and, later, of the famous baby boom—his own university, being a particularly prestigious one, was able to be more and more selective in its acceptance of students. (It was humorously rumored that some ambitious parents began preparing their children to qualify for his institution at the age of three. Even though passed around with purely self-mocking intent, how could such a rumor not heighten the sense of self-worth of everybody teaching there?)

Then too he was far better paid than in his own student years he had been led to expect. There were, besides, emoluments he had not even dreamed of: grants and free time and trips; every now and then a year in Paris or Rome. At some point, he had been able to buy a small house in the south of France in which to while away his summers, as well as to invest a derisory but nevertheless comforting sum in the stock market, and among his other tasteful cultivations, to put together the makings of a small but quite respectable wine cellar.

When the time for it came, he did, predictably, vote for John F. Kennedy—certainly no decent person could vote for Richard Nixon—but he did so quite without enthusiasm. His heart still belonged to Adlai. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. had written and spoken reassuringly about Kennedy, and there were few political minds he respected more than Schlesinger's, but he could not shake off his memory of old man Kennedy's well-known isolationist views at the time of the rise of Hitler. It was said that Joseph Kennedy's sons set great store by their father and that they had been brought up to regard liberals, like himself and Schlesinger, as sissies. But vote he did, there was no choice. (Not too long after Kennedy's inauguration, when a senior member of his department was actually invited to a state dinner in the White House and returned in a glow to speak of the supreme courtesies extended there, he cheerfully conceded that government policies were not everything, that the tone of an administration was important, too.)

Kennedy was around for a tragically brief time, yet even so there were foreign troubles aplenty. There were the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin Wall, the Cuban missile crisis, all of them coming uncomfortably and even frighteningly close to war. (Places called Laos and Vietnam he just couldn't even get his mind around—not yet.) Somehow, though, neither he nor anyone he knew felt anything other than a growing admiration for the administration, the full measure of which would not be taken until after the assassination of this beautiful young President.

He cared about foreign policy, of course, for foreign policy was after all just another way of saying war and peace. But something else had at the same time begun to interest and stir him far more, and his students, too. That was the onset of the heroic new campaign for civil rights in the schools and streets and buses and lunch counters of the South.

Being a Northern liberal, he had always stood four square behind the civil-rights movement, following its progress through the courts, sending a modest check now and then to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He had celebrated the decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka*; had felt angry contempt for Eisenhower's expressed belief that racial integration in the South would be, and could only be, a long, slow process; had cheered the forcible admission of blacks into universities like Ole Miss; had ached for what had to be the feelings of little black children being led into school through rock-throwing mobs, thinking that had it been his children, he himself would not have had the courage. And as for his children, he had banished the word "nigger" from even the mere vicinity of their earshot (including an admonition to his West Indian cleaning lady that she had better not ever again, on pain of dismissal, use that word in referring to her American boyfriend). He had also pressed the private school to which he sent them to raise a special scholarship fund devoted to bringing in children with ghetto experience in order to offset the cultural depri-

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vations of an overprotected upper-middle-class upbringing.

He could not altogether suppress a doubt or two about some of the movement's demands, especially in the North. Specifically, he was not absolutely certain that school busing to achieve racial integration was a good thing as far as the children themselves were concerned. But clearly the people who were opposed to busing, who launched a campaign of their own to "save the neighborhood school," were not acting out of the same kind of sensitive concern he felt for the welfare of the children; simply from the look of them you could tell that their motives were fundamentally racist. Anyway, his doubts were not that strong; after all, his own children were bused to school with no bad effect, were they not?

Be such concerns as they might, the whole country was moving in a manner and to a degree he would not have believed possible only a decade earlier. Even the students in his university, who only yesterday had seemed to care for nothing but career—the Silent Generation, a recent best-selling book had called them—were now marching up and down outside of Woolworth's in solidarity with the Negro kids sitting-in at the Woolworth's lunch counters in the South.

Later he was to marvel at how quickly, in the event, all the remaining legislative and juridical props of racial discrimination simply collapsed before the combined determination and political skill of Lyndon Johnson. If Kennedy had provided a cosmetically more pleasing Washington in the less than three years allotted to him, nothing he ever did could compare with the electrifying moment when in the course of a major address, Lyndon Baines Johnson, the President of the United States and a Texan to boot, intoned the words "We Shall Overcome."

Moreover, Johnson's ambition to finish the job had been politically confirmed by the voters. Without hesitation and with great good cheer they had administered a massive defeat to the Republicans, who had had the temerity to nominate the extremely right-wing Barry Goldwater, about whose views on race one could be quite certain.

In the meantime, his professional life was also moving, and in a most pleasingly absorbing way. There were conferences to attend all over the world, papers to prepare, a textbook—the main support of both summer house and wine cellar—to revise, and the true love of his life, a major study, which promised to call forth all his best talents and learning, to commence a five-year romance with.

Still, he was from time to time to look up from his desk and note that once again the world around him was becoming oddly troubled. Or perhaps not so oddly. In that far-off place, of all places, called Vietnam, quite suddenly there were hundreds of thousands of American boys fighting a popular guerrilla insurrection in the jungle. One of his colleagues had for years been disturbing dinner parties and ruining conversations, like the Ancient Mariner stopping one of three, to sound dire warnings about our sinful and hopeless involvement in Vietnam. He had always thought the man a bore; now he could see that the more appropriate term would have been prophet.

And the people one was now required to refer to as blacks, far from settling in to a new place in society, were getting more riled up than ever. Gone were the days of nonviolence; the operative principle now was rage. Much as he regretted that things were turning out this way, he had to say he could understand why. After all, the abrogation of Jim Crow, necessary as it had been, and uplifting as it had felt to whites like him, must have seemed to the blacks like a mere scratch on the surface. For them there was so much farther to go and so much frustration along the way. He who tended to look at the world from a perspective that reached back across centuries couldn't expect the newly liberated to share his long-suffering sense of things.

Nevertheless, the sheer turbulence was disorienting to him. The blacks were not only angry, they were shouting slogans like "burn, baby, burn," and rioting—that is, setting real fires, not just verbal ones. They were declaring war on the police and trumpeting their hatred of and vowing vengeance against white Northern liberals like *him*. Some aspects of black behavior he could easily recognize. He was able to comprehend why there was so much rage and violence now, precisely as an accompaniment to an improvement in the black condition—had not the French Revolution come about through a similar social process? He could also comprehend the blacks' hatred of him, misguided as it was—wasn't the masked racism of the North (not his, of course) in its very subtlety and complexity worse to confront and deal with than the open and official segregationism of the South?

What he could not understand at all, however, was the new claim of Africanness and all the fashions pertaining thereto. He had met black African intellectuals at several conferences; none of them wore this garment called the dashiki that was being so widely sported by American black spokesmen. He wholeheartedly assented to the proposition that black is beautiful, and approved highly of its being asserted as a point of pride, but he could not make sense of the way so many blacks were Africanizing their names. He supposed there was something to their wish to divest themselves of the names given to their families in slavery, but they were not after all Africans.

In the same way, he was perfectly prepared to grant black students the right to pursue black studies; after what they had been put through, both as individuals and as a group, they were entitled to the special consideration of deciding for themselves what they wished to study. But why, he could not help wondering, should they want

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to? Had the object of the exercise been the creation of an intellectual ghetto? His puzzlement on this score was finally to be overcome when at the suggestion of a friend he sat down and read an essay by James Baldwin called "The Fire Next Time." The blacks, Baldwin declared, had no desire to integrate into a burning house; American life was so dead, and thus so deadening, that what blacks needed was a way out of it, not a way in. He felt quite suddenly illuminated but also a little uncomfortable. He had assimilated much "fire" into what he had defined for himself as the humane view. His children had had quite a hand in helping him to do so. But the radical tone of Baldwin was for him as yet an unaccustomed voice to bring into the general harmony.

Then, as if in confirmation of Baldwin's assertion that American life was intolerable, but a confirmation, if truth be told, that came a lot closer to home, the white students in his university began behaving in a way never before seen. They demonstrated, they camped for days in the offices of the university administration, they stormed classrooms, they occupied buildings. At the same time that they seemed so full of political purpose, they were also peculiarly withdrawn and apathetic and meaninglessly destructive. They defecated on the floors of occupied buildings and sprayed graffiti on the walls.

The most common explanation of this behavior, from the students themselves and from the journalists who sought to interpret them, was that they were protesting and attempting to bring an end to the Vietnam war. No one could of course have been more opposed to the Vietnam war than he, now that he had turned his attention to it, and in his view any young man would be justified in resisting being drafted to serve in that war, perjuring himself, if need be, to stay out of it. He couldn't help feeling, though, that the war by itself was an inadequate explanation for the students' behavior. If it were, why would they have gone after the institutions of higher education? The universities were not responsible for making this war, and not only were they not responsible, it happened that they were the best legal haven in which to be protected from the draft.

He had to confess that while he sympathized with the sorrows of the young—all their sorrows, from their fear of the war to their distaste for the workaday world lying so inexorably in wait for them—he was just a bit resentful, too. If he could easily understand why the blacks found it necessary to hate him, it was at first not at all clear to him by what right the children of the upper middle class—children, after all, just like his own—regarded him as the enemy.

WHEN campus violence first broke out, at Berkeley and then at Columbia, he and his colleagues had quietly suspected that these institutions in some sense probably deserved what had happened to them. Berkeley was so big and impersonal, perhaps it had produced an explosive alienation in its students. As for Columbia, it was perhaps too academically demanding, especially for a school that offered so little in the way of social amenities.

Thus when the violence hit his own school, not many years later, he was quite unprepared. Only in a series of faculty senate meetings that were called following the students' first posting of their "non-negotiable demands" did he finally begin to piece out for himself what the issues really were and how a decent man was required to respond.

One of the things that impeded the process of clarification as far as he was concerned was that, to his inexpressible shock and chagrin, his name was conspicuously among those listed as faculty members deemed by the "revolution" to be the most politically offensive. It was an outrage, no doubt about it; these kids probably didn't know a great and historic political tradition from a handsaw—who but the most misguided could question the liberality and breadth of his mind? One day, he determined, his detractors would have to be brought to see their error.

The key issue being debated by the faculty senate was that of punishment. Should there, for instance, be suspensions? If so, who should be subject to them: only the ringleaders, or all those who had most actively disrupted the academic enterprise and destroyed campus property? What about exams? How could students whose classes had been shut down be examined fairly? In the course of the debate, people evinced great confusion and ambivalence. Nothing in their prior experience had conditioned them to deal with such questions. Should students be appeased or punished? His colleagues wanted to do both and neither. They knew that professional self-respect, if nothing else, required them to make *some* out-of-the-ordinary response. So they grew testy with one another. And while bands of students were still enjoying free run of several administrative offices and demanding such things as the abolition of grades and representation on the school's board of trustees, the professors in solemn conclave gathered began to tax one another with a variety of historic truths produced by and within their respective academic disciplines.

Just at the moment when these learned exchanges were moving into a state of genuine acrimony, he found himself rising to his feet. He had been seized with one of those blinding insights that are only rarely vouchsafed a man in the course of a lifetime. He began to speak, quietly, calmly, and with great clarity. The students were not behaving well, he said, of that there was no doubt. But what was really his and his colleagues' obligation as scholars, and the obligation of the university as an institution of higher learning, if not to expand their own understanding of an event or phenomenon before advising or taking action on it? The room grew hushed.

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For the first time in several hours everybody was intently focused and listening.

True, he repeated, these students have crossed the bounds of appropriate conduct, but that is not as important as it might seem. What is truly important, and what in our confusion and anger we have been unable to see our way clear about, is that these kids are—in doubtless a too undisciplined way—merely reflecting back to us what we ourselves have been teaching them! They wish for something more just and lovely to do than to plant America's heels on the necks of Third World people. They wish for a life that carries them to a higher place than a well-paid slot in a corporation. They wish for a more serious and exalted measure of their worth than success and failure as our society is wont to define these terms. I ask you—he was coming to his conclusion and, he could sense, bringing them along with him—from where did they get such aspirations? In their suburbs? From the example of their ever-upwardly-mobile parents? No, they learned from us, from the books we placed in their hands, from the ideas we taught them to find in those books, from the longing for transcendence that is an essential feature of the life of the mind. Why should we punish them, and how in all good conscience could we do so? Let us complete the logic of our own true intellectual ambition and abolish those silly damn grades. If they want to learn for learning's sake only, why should we not bless them for it? By all means, put them on the board of trustees. They will cool down a little with some actual institutional responsibility and at the same time add some new vitality to the place.

He easily carried the vote of the academic senate that day. (Later he was to remark to his wife that for the first time he had truly grasped how it must feel to be a political leader.) In the months following, during which some state of, if not peace, then of a surly but nonviolent cold war was setting in between the university and its students, he returned to his own manuscript with renewed absorption. When in the following year an offer came from another university of equal prestige to his own but even less demanding with respect to the time spent in actual teaching, he enthusiastically accepted.

As the Vietnam war wound down and American participation came to an end, whatever activist spirit remained in the world immediately surrounding him seemed to have shifted from the kids to the adults.

Watergate had left him and his friends shaken at the realization of how close a shave had been administered to American democracy. All the shocks of the 60's, very much including the three assassinations in less than five years, had produced so unnatural, so perverse, a phenomenon as the Nixon presidency. It almost added to the perversion, in his eyes, that this same presidency had itself produced such happy events as the opening to China and the relaxation of tension with the Soviets. No period could have been more appropriately characterized as times out of joint than the years 1968-73. Finally, however, it had to be said that the system—once so roundly excoriated by the young—had performed as its inventors had meant it to do: extruding by due process the alien Nixonian presence that had been so inimical to its good health. Even so, he could not quite dispel his own gloom at the idea that Richard Nixon had been reelected in 1972 by an overwhelming landslide. In an emergency, the system could be trusted, but in the normal course of things the voters obviously couldn't. They had grown so crabbed and mean that they had not only reelected Nixon but wholeheartedly embraced him.

Moreover, by the mid-70's he and his colleagues were beginning to glimpse this new mean-spiritedness up close, in the classroom and around the seminar table. Almost overnight a new crop of students, all social passion spent, were quietly and cheerlessly commencing to grind their way through their studies. They were completing assignments, fretting over grades—pass/fail was of little use to them in their applications to professional school and they demanded its abolition. They had, in short, become an extremely uninteresting and, to a teacher, unprepossessing bunch of careerists.

There was still a kind of round robin of political protest going on—for each season its own wrong to be righted—but by the early 1980's things were quite different from what they had been in the decades preceding. For the students were gathering and marching, showing films and signing petitions not in opposition to the university but on the contrary in solidarity with virtually the entire university community. After an all too brief respite, the United States was once more allying itself with the forces of counterrevolution in the Third World—in El Salvador, the Philippines, the Middle East, Nicaragua. . . . This time there could be no repetition of Vietnam, however, because this time no one was yawning in the faces of those sounding the alarm as he and his friends had so disastrously done in the early 1960's. He did not of course march or sign petitions—that was not his way—but on one occasion he did sign a newspaper ad whose text was in the form of a letter to President Reagan demanding to know why he preferred death squads and terrorists in Central America to women and children. (In truth, he thought the text rather too overwrought but signed anyway, defiantly.) It was the only public gesture he made, but he noted with a certain pleasure that his presence among the signatories had not been overlooked by friends and colleagues.

Despite the fact that he sympathized completely with many student campaigns, however, and at least to some extent with all of them, unlike in the 1960's he could not see that it had made the students who took part in them either more fetching or on the other hand more hateful than the

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ones who didn't. Since virtually each and every protest had become no more than the expression of a community-wide attitude, it didn't seem to touch the kids as it had once done. In other words, there was actually nothing at stake in their politics for this generation of kids, not their careers, not their futures. They could distribute leaflets by day and chart their course into law school with the greatest, and most dismal, care by night.

He did note that there were two remaining liberation movements, movements whose objects were still their own members, at it were, and whose roots were steadily embedding themselves in the institution. These were women's liberation and gay liberation; but unlike the radical coalition of the 60's whose ambitions had been so all-encompassing that it had called itself simply "the movement," these liberators were demanding liberation *into*, not *from*, the "establishment."

The girls were certainly angry (he *must* remember to stop calling them "girls"), but there was no straightforward way to think about their demands. The blacks had only wanted some needed preferential consideration in recompense for their centuries of disadvantage: a special standard of acceptance, remedial courses to help catch them up, courses to teach them about their own experience, sometimes their own living and dining quarters in which to feel more at home. The homosexuals, too (whom he had to discipline himself to call gays), at bottom had one basic, comprehensible demand: recognition of their legitimacy. With the young women, it was a good deal harder to come to terms. They sometimes talked as if they also needed some special allowance to be made for them, but since academically they were fully competitive, it wasn't quite clear what allowance the university was supposed to make. Did they wish, like the blacks, to live segregated? It didn't seem so to him. Courses in women's studies had been established almost immediately upon request, but these courses seemed to him mostly to be making people angrier, both the people studying in them and the people teaching them.

And feminist anger was different from that radical anger about which he had in an earlier moment experienced his sudden illumination. It sounded so private, like the response of someone being personally offended all the time. He felt utterly defeated by it. He offered the just grievances of women his deepest respects, tried extremely hard to use the right language in the company of female students and colleagues, made a mental note that one day he really must get down to reading some of the newly discovered literary classics by women—Aphra Behn, say—and for the rest he prayed to be allowed to keep his distance.

However displeased and baffled he was by the students, they had, truth to tell, very little impact on his life. For him, undergraduates were mainly supernumeraries filling up the campus walks and lawns, while the graduate students willing to submit themselves to his rather stringent (some said vindictive) standards of scholarship were few and getting fewer—a circumstance he could hardly describe as discommoding to him.

With colleagues, though, the story was rather different. He had once savored Henry Kissinger's observation that academic politics were often very vicious precisely because there was so little at stake; like Kissinger, he felt, he had achieved sufficient eminence early enough to hold himself above the run of departmental squabbles. But as the years were wearing on, something was happening to academic politics. They seemed to him to be taking on more and more weight, and of a more and more disturbing kind.

Politics in the university had for one thing grown quite litigious. There were lawsuits about everything—admissions, promotions, tenure decisions—with charges of racism and sexism and violations of academic freedom being bandied about everywhere. Even the federal government was sometimes involved. About all this he tried to maintain an intelligent complexity, that is, to think about each case on its own individual merits. After all, he was not an ideologue, he was a liberal: justice in every single case might not be only on one side.

At the same time, with regard to the minority issue, which was the source of most of the litigation, one had a higher moral obligation. On this issue, indeed, he had adopted for himself the only position a decent person could hold, namely, against racial or ethnic quotas of any kind, but heartily in favor of affirmative action. Affirmative action meant hiring, or admitting, a sufficient number of blacks and/or Hispanics to bring their numbers at the university into some kind of relation with their presence in the population as a whole. The difference between this and a quota, he explained to himself, was that a quota was meant to keep people out and affirmative action was meant to bring them in. Thus while he might have some sympathy, he also felt some impatience with those of his junor colleagues assigned to teaching incoming freshmen who complained of having too many unqualified students: as the leading agency of accreditation in this society, the university had some obligation to bring these students along and make them qualified. What better could these young teachers be doing with their time?

About the racial component in faculty hiring he was somewhat less certain. Clearly there were not yet enough fully qualified blacks to meet this or that "goal" for the tenured faculties of every university in the country. His own department had twice lost out in the hiring of a distinguished black academic to some institution more pleasantly situated. On the other hand, there were fields he could name—education, for example, or social work, not to mention the new-found field of black

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studies—where standards of formal scholarship need not be set so high as in his own and where what they call "street smarts" could make an invaluable contribution. The matter had in any case been largely taken out of the university's hands by steady coercive pressure from the federal government and the courts.

None of this, or his ongoing uneasiness about the value to black students of specializing in black studies, had readied him for the incident of campus racial politics into which, despite all his careful abstentions, he had somehow permitted himself to be drawn. One day a memo had come to him, as it had to every senior member of the faculty, complaining that Professor X of the black-studies department was teaching anti-Semitic doctrine and failing students who objected. The memo was signed by two young Jewish teaching fellows who had been approached with this information by a black student afraid to issue the complaint in his own name lest terrible sanctions be visited upon him. The memo demanded the appointment of a committee to investigate the student's charge and, were it to be substantiated, the dismissal forthwith of Professor X, who was, as it happened, just then up for tenure.

On reading the memo he was both surprised and not surprised. Blacks had not for some time been shy about expressing their hostility toward the Jews, and he for one, while abhorring their opinions on this subject, could sympathize with their feelings. The Jews were the closest to them, right there just ahead of them in line, and it was a given of social psychology that people striking out in hurt strike those nearest to hand. But he nevertheless found it hard to believe that an about-to-be-tenured professor at a major university, holder of a Ph.D. from another major university, would corrupt his teaching in this way. And he found besides, although not without a twinge of guilt, that he was growing just a mite weary of the plaints of Jews. They were after all doing very well, especially in the universities, but somehow they would never give over being inordinately touchy. He noted that the original source of the complaint was a black student, not a Jew, but maybe he was seeking revenge against his professor for some other reason and knew that Jews could always be stirred to action by such a charge. Still, if true, the professor's behavior would have to be considered unacceptable, not to say damaging to the reputation of the university's black-studies department.

This was why he felt he could not say no when the president himself asked him to serve on a committee appointed to investigate Professor X. The other committee members were, like him, very senior professors who enjoyed some recognition in the outside world and who were known to be men of impeccable liberal credentials. They were requested by the president to conduct their investigation as quickly and quietly as possible, and to come to some resolution before word of the problem began to agitate forces on both sides of this unfortunate imbroglio both on and off the campus. They had no idea, the president concluded emphatically, how very unpleasant this business could grow to be.

The first thing the committee undertook to do was examine the course in question. In the course catalog it was listed as "Sources of Imperialism Today" and described as "a study of the way an international network of bankers and merchants controls Western governments to enslave Palestinians, South African blacks, and others." Heading the list of required readings obtained from the department's secretary was the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. So it was that—once they ascertained that the *Protocols* was not on the list in order to be treated to any sort of objective analysis, a possibility they agreed they had in all good conscience to consider—they were able to complete their investigation rather quickly. Two students had been failed in the preceding semester: as they suspected, the black who initiated the complaint, and a young white woman. He could not even explain to his wife the depth of the distress he was feeling; nor could he figure out whether the greater part of that distress was occasioned by Professor X, by the university administration which had dutifully accepted the course description without noticing, or by himself for having got mixed up in all this.

Professor X's own writings were no more reassuring. If they had been produced by students of theirs, the committee agreed, they would have been regarded as so much incoherent undergraduate rant. The man had a Ph.D. from a reputable university! No one wished to say anything more on the topic of Professor X's Ph.D. than could be expressed aloud by a large, collective, yet very private sigh.

If the investigation turned out to be brief, the deliberations of the committee that followed seemed endless. Surely they could not exonerate the professor, but on the other hand, if he were fired, the lawsuits and protests, possibly even riots, that would inevitably follow would set back not only the university but race relations in the region for years. Moreover—it was he who pointed this out, to his colleagues' relief and admiration for his cogency at a critical moment—it would not be right to fire him, for doing so would be *ex post facto*. The university had permitted Professor X to teach this course for several years now without protest; how was he supposed to have discovered all of a sudden that it was impermissible? Back and forth they went over possible remedies. Finally, they fashioned a solution and, delighted with their wisdom and statesmanship, toasted one another with his best sherry.

They met with the offending professor, offered their proposal, and, to their immense gratitude, found him most pliant. He would modify his

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course and its reading list to make it a more balanced and reflective analysis of oppression and exploitation in the Third World. He would accept a one-year delay in his candidacy for tenure, and he would significantly raise the grades of the students he had failed and promise not to grade in that way again. They on their side would take all due steps to quell any nasty gestures or publicity against him engendered by the circulation of the memo of complaint. Hands were shaken all around. The president sent each committee member a note of the warmest commendation.

Once again, with his help, the shoals had been safely navigated, but for some reason he didn't feel quite as pleased with himself as his mind told him he should. Actually, he felt uneasy, and wished he had never in the first place been put in the position of having his consciousness raised about the general state of things in Professor X's department. He vowed to himself not to peer into that can of worms, or any like it, ever again.

YET whatever the distress occasioned by his brush with the dark underside of affirmative action, it was as nothing compared with his growing distress at the spectacle being offered by a group of his erstwhile intellectual associates. For as the 70's wore on, the people in question were becoming more vociferously opposed to everything they all had once, and he still, believed in.

They were people he had once regarded as his peers, a number of them as his friends. As a consequence, he couldn't quite fathom what was happening to them. They began by being not only emphatically vociferous critics of black radicalism but were even opponents, *in principle*, of affirmative action. They had come to be ever more willing to say openly nasty things about student protest, not only attacking the students' behavior but impugning their idealism. They attacked the welfare state, spoke of it, for instance, as unacceptably intrusive government, and set out to analyze the various ways in which the welfare system was harmful to the poor. They commenced to praise capitalism (a word he had never heard anyone but Communists actually speak before). They were demanding expansion of the military, nuclear as well as conventional, and wished to see a return to the old cold-war adversarial stance vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, and were even, by the early 1980's, smiling benignly at the prospect of the use of American force in small and far-off countries.

Think of it—people who had not so long ago sat with him at his very own table, some of them, and discussed his and their collective anxieties about Vietnam! Not even the odious Richard Nixon had gone so far about anything as they seemed now prepared to go. Of course, there had always been millions of people who had such views; he was not so provincial as not to know that. But never in his wildest dreams had he imagined that people to whom he had once offered respect and fellowship, whether personally or by reputation, could one day seriously advocate ideas of this kind. What was more, and what did in the end make civil relations with such people quite impossible, was that this advocacy was not in the least apologetic.

The phenomenon had been labeled neoconservatism, though some of the people involved insisted for a time on continuing to call themselves liberals (some, to his bewilderment, even continued to call themselves social democrats). He tried first to explain their apostasy to himself as the overreaction of certain Jewish intellectuals to the trauma of black anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel, as well as to the fear that the costs of affirmative action would be paid primarily by them or their children. But for one thing, they were not all Jews; and for another, this would not explain their sudden new support for—another term he had never heard used except by the remotest of strangers—the so-called free-enterprise system.

Another explanation, one that on the principle of Occam's razor he found far more satisfactory, was that they were merely hungry for success and power. That is, a group of academics and intellectuals, many of them the children of immigrants, were aspiring to become part of the ruling conservative establishment and were thus taking on its attitudes and becoming outspoken defenders of its interests.

The one thing he would not and could not credit was their own account of their behavior, namely, that their experience had changed their minds about the world. No: these people had been educated at the same schools as he and his friends, had read the same books, had studied the same thinkers, listened to the same music, written for the same journals—above all, shared the same history. What could experience have had to do with making them so unfeeling?

Since he was a liberal, he was by definition not doctrinaire. He could, for instance, perfectly well understand and even admire some examples of classic conservative thought, though with the best will in the world he could not agree that such thought was in the least applicable to the American experience. Even so, he was willing here and there to adopt a point of analysis or observation from a conservative thinker, just as he was from a Marxist thinker. But these neoconservatives were not conservatives in his sense of the term at all. Real conservatives did not love capitalism any better than he did, for example. And they believed in noblesse oblige, which among other things translated into an idea about the responsibility of the elite to see to the welfare of the unfortunate. These people, however, insisted on talking as if the victims themselves ought to be responsible for overcoming their own sorrows.

Social policy not being his field, he had always kept himself politely and respectfully off to the side of it. Something he admitted only to his wife,

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but knew full well was an attitude shared by many around him, was that he found the whole poverty debate, with its statistics and counter-statistics, a bore. As he did, for that matter, the debate over nuclear weaponry. He did not exactly praise himself for this attitude, but there were only so many things a person of high scholarly standards could master.

He was quite prepared to accept that there might be some substance to certain aspects of the neoconservative analysis. No doubt the welfare system was due for a major overhaul. No doubt all the 60's programs for dealing with crime and drugs and street violence were not succeeding. But to require welfare mothers to go to work, as some neoconservatives were said to be suggesting, or to hold fourteen- or fifteen-year-olds responsible for their crimes as if they were adults, even if a solid argument could be made for it—all this was too awful to bear thinking about. These women needed precisely to be treated with dignity, and their children needed jobs, and schooling, and role models. Sending them to jail would only make hardened criminals out of them. He was just as frightened of being mugged as the next man; indeed, one of the reasons he had moved to a different university was that it seemed a safer place; but he hoped his fear would never blind him to the fact that what the muggers needed—and what an uncaring society was apparently growing too brutal to provide—was hope, not punishment. Just as what the addicts and drug dealers needed—and what an uncaring society was growing too brutal to provide—was treatment and education.

Even so, it was not the particulars of this all-guns-blazing campaign against the welfare state that first distressed and then infuriated him—not even the high praise for capitalism, which seemed to be spreading all over the world, including China; it was the relentlessness, the force, the damnable assurance of it. Why could they not meet some of these issues of theirs halfway? Why did they speak so emphatically about things like the "poverty industry" or the "hidden agenda" of the environmentalists? Why did they insist on reminding everyone about Munich all the time, as if every hope, every possibility, for world peace had to be a snare and a delusion? Why, in other words, did they have to be so unpleasant, so lacking in compassion? Was it any wonder, when the time came, that they fastened themselves to the Reagan administration, realizing to the fullest their overweening ambition for power by supplying the intellectual underpinning for Reagan's desire to indulge his rich friends and grind the faces of the poor?

But by far the most unforgivable of the neoconservatives' campaigns, from first to last, was their assault on the university. For diagnosing the impulse behind this one, he thought, perhaps the psychoanalysts should be called in. Beginning with their ugly reading of the motives of the students in the 1960's and their outspoken contempt for the efforts of various university administrations to arrive at an equitable settlement with student concerns and grievances, the neoconservatives refused to let up. Each and every outcome of the universities' various efforts to be fair to minorities could be counted on to draw their fire. They poked fun at the new standards of grading, hooting at the fact that sometimes half of a graduating class would be accorded honors. They charged—ridiculously!—that faculty hiring had been skewed to the Left. They carried on a vast campaign of negative publicity each time someone like their beloved Jeane Kirkpatrick was shouted off a university platform. (He did not, of course, approve of the shouters, standing as he did second to none in his commitment to the principle of free speech, and he had pushed for a rule that all demonstrations against a speaker should be confined to the periods before and after the actual speech. Still, figures like Kirkpatrick must be aware of campus sentiment about them, and in his opinion were themselves being more than a little provocative when they accepted these invitations to speak in the first place.)

Perhaps worst of all from his own point of view was the neoconservatives' constant sniping at the intellectual life of the university, as if they rather than people like him were the keepers of the flame of enlightenment. There was nothing he resented more. Sometimes their carrying-on got to be quite silly; if he were not so angered by it, he could really laugh. For instance, when the faculty and administration of Stanford arrived at a decision to revise one of these undergraduate survey courses in Western civilization to make it more inclusive of the rest of the world's peoples and cultures, these neoconservative self-styled saviors of American education turned a mere curriculum revision into some kind of national political event. Imagine cabinet members and even members of Congress taking a hand in the process of altering a reading list!

As it happened, he had never been a great lover of such survey courses: fifty pages of this and a hundred pages of that was not his idea of how to relate properly to a body of knowledge. Better for the kids to read nothing at all than snippets. Still, since there were such courses, to assert that you could tell which things belonged in them and which did not seemed to him the height not only of ethnocentrism—as the Stanford faculty had complained—but of a kind of thoroughly outdated provincial arrogance. Students nowadays had other interests, a different sense of the world and their place in it. What was intellectually important about holding them to something that was dead to them?

Why die, as he put it one day over lunch to his only friend worthy to receive such a witticism, why die for Dante?

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They were sitting on his friend's deck overlooking the sea at Martha's Vineyard, wild and thrilling in the autumn sunlight. Their conversation, despite the seductiveness of its setting, had grown gloomy, for the topic that could not be escaped at that summer's end was the upcoming presidential election and they were in agreement that they could not remember a more depressing campaign than the one being waged by and for George Bush. He had expected that the Democrats would have a difficult time because Ronald Reagan had so inconveniently turned peacemaker and because of a widespread illusion that the economy was booming. And if the truth be known, he was less than enthusiastic about Michael Dukakis and supposed there must be others who shared his feelings. But the fact that the Republicans already had a natural edge with the electorate made it all the more chilling to realize that what they were mainly focusing on was something Reagan had referred to, with a nastiness hardly concealed by the pretense of humor involved, as "the L-word."

Somehow, when he was not looking, liberalism had become a kind of obscenity. To call your opponent a liberal was to hurl at him an accusation about which, apparently, little more needed to be said. And that the liberal label was one from which it was considered the better part of wisdom for a politician to flee was confirmed over and over by Dukakis himself, who over and over was seen to be fleeing from it.

What was going on here, he wanted to know each morning as he read his paper. The United States, damn it, was a liberal country, it had always *been* a liberal country. These people were not attacking failed policies but attempting to alter the very essence of everything. Would no one protest—not in the name of Michael Dukakis, the hell with Michael Dukakis, but in the name of all those liberals who had been the country's "best and brightest" from the founding to the present day?

So he had been delighted (and just the teeniest bit envious) when the eminent historian Fritz Stern of Columbia had spoken to this very point in an op-ed piece in the New York *Times*. Professor Stern pointed out that liberalism, once declared by Lionel Trilling to be not only the dominant but the sole intellectual tradition in the United States, had stood for freedom against tyranny, for the protection and extension of individual rights, for toleration, and for progress. Whoever anathematized it, as Reagan had done in this campaign, traduced the American past and injured American politics today.

He especially liked that word "traduce." The voters whose favor the Bush campaign was seeking not only could not be trusted—as they had demonstrated in the Nixon landslide and then again in the Reagan landslide of 1984—but they had now openly become the troglodytes that naked greed seemed to free people up to be.

In addition to Professor Stern's little essay, there had been a few other gestures of a similar nature, but while they momentarily cheered one up, they were quite obviously going to do little to stop the rhetorical erosion. Nor, however much it might encourage him to be reminded that the country's great political truths and traditions were on his side, was he to be spared the inevitable neoconservative counterattack, the almost Pavlovian reaction to any and every form of liberal assertion. This counterattack basically consisted of the argument—he had heard it before and on hearing it again found it no less lacking in kindness and compassion—that it was not Ronald Reagan but people like him who had abetted the discrediting of liberalism by failing to stand up for traditionally liberal principles ever since those principles had been coming under assault from radical students, from black militants, and from the women's movement.

Good God! It was not enough for these conservatives, neo or otherwise, to win elections; they also had to go on trying to impugn the intellectual honesty and moral fortitude of others.

Thus it was that he and his friend spoke gloomily on that bright late September day about Bush's almost certain election and about their recognition that, for them, a great deal more had come to be at stake than the 1988-92 presidency. If liberalism was to be regarded as a sin, how were they, politically speaking, to understand themselves or the world any more?

They spoke, too, of the state of things at the university where they were colleagues. A crisis was looming in the department of humanities, not altogether dissimilar from the one at Stanford, a crisis being fomented by a group of female faculty members determined, as they put it, to expunge all symptoms of a perduring phallocracy from the school's humanities courses. (It was in this connection that he uttered his witticism about Dante.) To top it all off, the university was engaged in a search for a new president, and there were parties in favor of one or another kind of representative candidate already forming and seeking adherents.

* * * *

The wine was excellent, the sun was warm. Within days, he would be setting out on a year's leave, publisher's advance in pocket, to be spent in deep communion with his word processor in his house in France.

He could not, he thought, have picked a better time to get away, and wondered if in a year's time he would feel ready to return.

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Hemingway: Portrait of the Artist As an Intellectual

Paul Johnson

At first glance Ernest Hemingway is not easily recognized as an intellectual at all. On closer inspection he is not only seen to exhibit all the chief characteristics of the intellectual but to possess them to an unusual degree, and in a specifically American combination. He was, moreover, a writer of profound originality. He transformed the way in which his fellow Americans, and people throughout the English-speaking world, expressed themselves. He created a new, personal, secular, and highly contemporary ethical style, which was intensely American in origin, but translated itself easily into many cultures. He fused a number of American attitudes together and made himself their archetypal personification, so that he came to embody America at a certain epoch rather as Voltaire embodied France in the 1750's or Byron England in the 1820's.

Hemingway was born in 1899 in the salubrious suburb of Oak Park near Chicago.* His parents, Grace and Clarence Edmonds ("Ed") Hemingway were, or certainly seemed to be, healthy, industrious, efficient, well-educated, many-talented, and well adjusted to their society, grateful for their European cultural inheritance but proudly conscious of the way America had triumphantly improved upon it. They feared God and lived a full life, indoors and outdoors. Dr. Hemingway was an excellent physician who also hunted, shot, fished, sailed, camped, and pioneered; he possessed, and taught his son, all the wilderness skills of the woodsman. Grace Hemingway was a woman of strong intelligence, powerful will, and many accomplishments. She was widely read, wrote excellent prose and skillful verse, painted, designed and made furniture, sang well, played various instruments and wrote and published original songs. Both did everything in their power to transmit to their children, of whom Ernest as the eldest son was the most favored, all their cultural inheritance and to add to it. In many ways they were model parents, and Hemingway grew up well-read and highly literate, a skilled sportsman and an all-around athlete.

Both parents were strongly religious. They were Congregationalists, and Dr. Hemingway was a strict Sabbatarian too. They not only went to church on Sunday and said grace at meals but, according to Hemingway's sister Sunny, "We had morning family prayers accompanied by a Bible reading and a hymn or two." The moral code of mainstream Protestantism was minutely enforced by both parents and any infringements severely punished. Grace Hemingway spanked the children with a hairbrush, the Doctor with a razor-strop. Their mouths were washed out with bitter soap when they were detected lying or swearing. After punishment they were made to kneel down and beg God for forgiveness. Dr. Hemingway made it clear at all times that he identified Christianity with male honor and gentlemanly conduct: "I want you to represent," he wrote to Ernest, "all that is good and noble and brave and courteous in Manhood, and fear God and respect Woman." His mother wanted him to be a conventional Protestant hero, non-smoking, non-drinking, chaste before marriage, faithful within it, and at all times to honor and obey his parents, especially his mother.

Hemingway, however, rejected his parents' religion in toto, and with it any desire to be the sort of son they wanted. In his teens he seems to have decided, quite firmly, that he was going to pursue his genius and his inclination in all things, and to create for himself a vision both of the man of honor and of the good life which was his reward. This was a romantic, literary, and to some extent an ethical concept, but it had no religious content at all. Indeed, Hemingway seems to have been devoid of the religious spirit. He privately abandoned his faith at the age of seventeen when he met Bill and Katy Smith (the latter

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* In telling the story of Hemingway's life, I have relied throughout on the two excellent recent biographies by Kenneth S. Lynn and Jeffrey Meyers, as well as the earlier work by Carlos Baker.

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to become the wife of John Dos Passos), whose father, an atheist academic, had written an ingenious book "proving" Jesus Christ had never existed. Hemingway ceased to practice religion at the earliest possible moment, when he went to work at his first job on the Kansas City *Star* and moved into unsupervised lodgings. As late as 1918, when he was nearly twenty, he assured his mother: "Don't worry or cry or fret about my being a good Christian. I am just as much as ever, and pray every night and believe just as hard." But this was a lie, told for the sake of peace. He not only did not believe in God but regarded organized religion as a menace to human happiness. His first wife, Hadley, said she only saw him on his knees twice, at their wedding and at the christening of their son. To please his second wife, Pauline, he became a Roman Catholic, but he had no more conception of what his new faith meant than did Rex Mottram in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited.* He was furious when Pauline tried to observe its rules (e.g., over birth control) in ways which inconvenienced him. He published blasphemous parodies of the Our Father in his story "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" and of the crucifixion in his book about bullfighting, *Death in the Afternoon*; there is a blasphemous spittoon-blessing in his play *The Fifth Column.* Insofar as he did understand Roman Catholicism, he detested it. He raised not the slightest protest when, at the beginning of the Civil War in Spain, a place he knew and said he loved, hundreds of churches were burned, altars and sacred vessels desecrated, and many thousands of priests, monks, and nuns slaughtered. He abandoned even the formal pretense of being a Catholic after he left his second wife. All his adult life he lived, in effect, as a pagan, worshipping ideas of his own devising.

HEMINGWAY'S rejection of religion was characteristic of the adolescent intellectual, and still more characteristic in that it was part of a rejection of his parents' moral culture. He later sought to differentiate between his mother and father, in a way which exonerated the latter. When his father committed suicide, he tried to hold his mother responsible, though it was clearly a case of a doctor anticipating what he knew would be a painful, terminal illness. Dr. Hemingway was the weaker of the two parents but he supported his wife entirely in their disputes with their son, whose quarrel was with both rather than the mother alone. But Grace was the person on whom Hemingway's resistance concentrated, probably, in my view, because he recognized in her the chief source of his own egotistical will and his literary power. She was a formidable woman as he was becoming a formidable man. There was not room in the same circle for both.

Their dispute came to a head in 1920 when Hemingway, who had spent the latter part of World War I in an ambulance unit on the Italian front, and had returned something of a war hero, not only failed to find a job but offended his parents by his idle and (by their standards) vicious conduct. In July of that year Grace wrote him a Grand Remonstrance. Every mother's life, she said, was like a bank. "Every child that is born to her enters the world with a large and prosperous bank account, seemingly inexhaustible." The child draws and draws—"no deposits during *all* the early years." Then, up to adolescence, "while the bank is heavily drawn upon," there are "a few deposits of pennies, in the way of some services willingly done, some thoughtfulness and 'thank yous.'" With manhood, while the bank goes on handing out love and sympathy:

> The account needs some deposits by this time, some good-sized ones in the way of gratitude and appreciation, interest in Mother's ideas and affairs. Little comforts provided for the home; a desire to favor any of Mother's peculiar prejudices, on no account to outrage her ideas. Flowers, fruit or candy, or something pretty to wear, brought home to Mother with a kiss and a squeeze. . . . A surreptitious paying of bills, just to get them off Mother's mind . . . deposits which keep the account in good standing. Many mothers I know are receiving these and much more substantial gifts and returns from sons of less abilities than my son. Unless you, my son, Ernest, come to yourself, cease your lazy loafing and pleasure seeking . . . stop trading on your handsome face . . . and neglecting your duties to God and your Savior, Jesus Christ . . . there is nothing before you but bankruptcy: *You have overdrawn.*

She brooded on this document for three days, polishing it as carefully as Hemingway was ever to do his own prize passages, then presented it personally. It indicates whence he got the strong sense of moral outrage, not unmixed with self-righteousness, which is so important a part of his fiction.

Hemingway reacted as might have been expected, with slow, mounting, and prolonged fury, and from then on he treated his mother as an enemy. Dos Passos said Hemingway was the only man he had ever come across who really hated his mother. Another old acquaintance, General "Buck" Lanham, testified: "From my earliest days with Ernest Hemingway he always referred to his mother as 'that bitch.' He must have told me a thousand times how much he hated her and in how many ways." This hatred was reflected repeatedly, and variously, in the fiction. It spilled over into a related detestation of his elder sister, "my bitch sister Marcelline," "a bitch complete with handles." It broadened into a general hatred of families, often expressed in irrelevant contexts, as in the discussion of bad painters (his mother painted) in his autobiography, *A Moveable Feast*: "They do not do terrible things and make intimate harm, as families do. With bad painters all you

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need to do is not look at them. But even when you have learned not to look at families nor listen to them and have learned not to answer letters, families have many ways of being dangerous."

THE family breakup drove Hemingway to the Toronto *Star* and thence to Europe as a foreign correspondent and novelist. He repudiated not merely his parents' religion but his mother's view of an optimistic, Christianized culture, expressed in her powerful but conventional—and to him detestable—prose. One of the forces which drove Hemingway toward the literary perfectionism which became his outstanding characteristic was the overwhelming urge not to write like his mother, using the stale rhetoric of an overelaborate literary inheritance. (A sentence of hers which he particularly hated, as epitomizing her prose style, came from one of her letters to him: "You were named for the two finest and noblest gentlemen I have ever known.")

From 1921 Hemingway led the life of a foreign correspondent, using Paris as his base. He covered warfare in the Middle East and international conferences, but the main focus of his attention was on the expatriate *literati* of the Left Bank. He wrote poetry. He was trying to write prose. He read ferociously. One of the many habits he inherited from his mother was carrying books around with him, shoved into his pockets, so that he could read at any time or place during a pause in the action. He read everything, and all his life he bought books, so that any Hemingway habitation had stacks running along the walls. At his house in Cuba he was to build up a working library of 7,400 volumes, characterized by expert studies on all the subjects in which he was interested and by a wide range of literary texts, which he read and reread. He arrived in Paris having read virtually all the English classics but determined to broaden his range. He was never touchy about having missed a university education, but he regretted it and was anxious to fill any gaps its absence might have left. So he settled down to Stendhal, Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant, and Zola; the major Russian novelists, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky; and the Americans, Henry James, Mark Twain, and Stephen Crane. He read the moderns, too: Conrad, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, Maxwell Anderson, James Joyce. His reading was wide but also dictated by a growing urge to write. Since the age of fifteen he had made a cult of Kipling, and continued to study him all his life. To this was now added close attention to Conrad, and Joyce's brilliant collection, *Dubliners*. Like all really good writers, he not only devoured but analyzed and learned from the second-rate, such as Marryat, Hugh Walpole, and George Moore.

Hemingway moved right to the center of the Paris intelligentsia in 1922 with the help of Ezra Pound, who said of him: "He writes very good verse and he's the finest prose stylist in the world." Made in 1922, the remark is highly perceptive, for Hemingway had by no means yet developed his mature method. But he was working on it, as his early notebooks, with their infinite erasures and amendments, testify. Probably no writer of fiction has ever struggled so hard and so long to fashion a personal manner of writing exactly suited to the work he wished to do. A study of Hemingway during these years is a model of how a writer should acquire his professional skills. It is comparable, in nobility of aim and persistence of effort, with Ibsen's arduous efforts to become a playwright. It also had the same revolutionary impact on the craft.

It was Hemingway's belief that he had inherited a false world, symbolized by his parents' religion and moral culture, and that it must be replaced by a truthful one. What did he mean by truth? Not the inherited, revealed truth of his parents' Christianity—that he rejected as irrelevant—or the truth of any other creed or ideology derived from the past and reflecting the minds of others, however great, but the truth as he himself saw it, felt it, heard, smelled, and tasted it. He admired Conrad's literary philosophy and the way he summed up his aim—"scrupulous fidelity to the truth of my own sensations." That was his starting point. But how do you convey that truth? Most people when they write, including most professional writers, tend to slip into seeing events through the eyes of others because they inherit stale expressions and combinations of words, threadbare metaphors, clichés, and literary conceits. This is particularly true of journalists, covering at speed occasions which are often repetitive and banal. But Hemingway had had the advantage of an excellent training on the Kansas City *Star*. Its successive editors had compiled a house-style book of 110 rules designed to force reporters to use plain, simple, direct, and cliché-free English, and these rules were strictly enforced. Hemingway later called them "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing." In 1922, covering an international conference, he was taught the ruthless art of cablese by Lincoln Steffens, which he acquired with rapidity and growing delight. He showed Steffens his first successful effort, exclaiming: "Steffens, look at this cable: no fat, no adjectives, no adverbs—nothing but blood and bones and muscle. . . . It's a new language."

On this journalistic basis, Hemingway built his own method, which was both theory and practice. At one time or another he put down a lot about how to write—in *A Moveable Feast*, in *The Green Hills of Africa*, in *Death in the Afternoon*, and in *By-line* and elsewhere. The "basic principles of writing" he set down for himself are well worth study. He once defined the art of fiction, following Conrad, as "find what gave you the emotion; what the action was that gave you the excitement. Then write it down making it clear so that the reader

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can see it too." All had to be done with brevity, economy, simplicity, strong verbs, short sentences, nothing superfluous or for effect. "Prose is architecture," he wrote, "not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over." Hemingway paid particular attention to exactitude of expression and ransacked dictionaries for words. It is important to remember that, during the formative period of his prose style, he was also a poet, and strongly under the influence of Ezra Pound, who he said taught him more than anyone else. Pound was "the man who believed in the *mot juste*—the one and only correct word to use—the man who taught me to distrust adjectives." He also closely studied Joyce, another writer whose nose for verbal precision he respected and imitated. Indeed, insofar as Hemingway had literary progenitors, it might be said he was the offspring of a marriage between Kipling and Joyce.

But the truth is Hemingway's writing is *sui generis*. His impact on the way people not only wrote but saw, in the quarter-century 1925-50, was so overwhelming and conclusive, and his continuing influence since so pervasive, that it is now impossible for us to subtract the Hemingway factor from our prose, especially in fiction. But in the early 1920's he found it difficult to win approval, or even to get published at all. His first work, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, was a typical avant-garde venture, locally published in Paris. The big magazines would not look at his fiction, and as late as 1925, *The Dial*, itself regarded as adventurous, was still rejecting his stories, including that superb tale "The Undefeated." What Hemingway did is what all really original great writers do—he created his own market, he infected readers with his own taste. The method, which brilliantly combined bare, exact depiction of events with subtle hints of the emotional response to them, emerged in the years 1923-25, and it was in 1925 that the breakthrough came with the publication of *In Our Time*. The British critic Ford Madox Ford felt able to hail him as America's leading writer: "The most conscientious, the most master of his craft, the most consummate." To the American critic Edmund Wilson the book revealed prose "of the first distinction," which was "strikingly original" and of impressive "artistic dignity." This first success was quickly followed by two vivid and tragic novels, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the latter perhaps the best thing he ever wrote. These books sold hundreds of thousands of copies and were read and reread, digested, regurgitated, envied, and quarried by writers of every kind. As early as 1927, Dorothy Parker, reviewing his collection *Men Without Women* in the *New Yorker*, referred to his influence as "dangerous"—"the simplest thing he does looks so easy to do. But look at the boys who try to do it."

The Hemingway manner could be parodied but not successfully imitated because it was inseparable from the subject matter of the books and especially their moral posture. Hemingway's aim was to avoid explicit didacticism of any kind, and he denounced it in others, even the greatest. "I love *War and Peace*," he wrote, "for the wonderful, penetrating, and true descriptions of war and of people, but I have never believed in the great count's thinking. . . . He could invent more and with more insight and truth than anyone who ever lived. But his ponderous and messianic thinking was no better than many another evangelical professor of history and I learned from him to distrust my own Thinking with a capital T, and to try to write as truly, as straightly, as objectively, and as humbly as possible." In his best work he always avoided preaching at the reader, or even nudging his elbow by drawing attention to the way his characters behaved. Nevertheless, his books are suffused throughout with a new secular ethic, and this springs directly from the way Hemingway describes events and actions.

It is the subtle universality of the Hemingway ethic which makes him so archetypically an intellectual, and the nature of the ethic which reflects his Americanism. Hemingway saw the Americans as a vigorous, active, forceful, even violent people, doers, achievers, creators, conquerors and pacifiers, hunters and builders. He was a vigorous, active, forceful, even violent person himself. Talking to Pound and Ford about literature, he would break off from time to time to shadow-box around Ford's studio. He was a big, strong man, skilled in a vast range of physical activities. It was natural for him, as an American and writer, to lead a life of action, and to describe it. Action was his theme.

There was nothing new in that, of course. Action had been the theme of Kipling, whose heroes, or subjects, had been soldiers, engineers, sea captains, and rulers big and small—anyone or thing, indeed, periodically subject to the strain and motion of violent activity, even animals and machinery. But Kipling was not an intellectual. He was a genius, he had a "daemon," but he did not believe he could refashion the world by his own unaided intelligence, he did not reject the vast corpus of its inherited wisdom. On the contrary, he fiercely upheld its laws and customs as unalterable by puny man and depicted with relish the nemesis of those who defied them. Hemingway is much closer to Byron, another writer who longed for action and described it with enthusiastic skill. Byron did not believe in the utopian and revolutionary schemes of his friend Shelley, which seemed to him abstract ideals rather than workable concepts, but he had fashioned for himself a system of ethics, devised in reaction to the traditional code he had rejected when he left his wife and England for good. In this sense, and only in this sense, he was an intellectual.

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Like Byron, Hemingway worked by illustration. He once specified his ideal as the ability to exhibit "grace under pressure" (a curious phrase in view of his mother's name) but he went no further in definition. Probably his ethic was incapable of a precise definition and would have been injured and reduced by attempts to construct one. But it was infinitely capable of illustration and that is the driving force behind Hemingway's entire work. His novels are novels of action and that, paradoxically, makes them novels of ideology because to Hemingway there was no such thing as a morally neutral action. To him even a description of a meal is a moral statement since there are the right and wrong things to eat and drink, and right and wrong ways to eat and drink them. Almost any action—even adultery, stealing, or killing—can be performed correctly or incorrectly, or to be precise, nobly or ignobly. The author himself does not point the moral but he presents everything within an implicit moral framework so that the actions speak for themselves.

The essence of Hemingway's fiction is observing boxers, fishermen, bullfighters, soldiers, writers, sportsmen, or almost anyone who has definite and skilled actions to perform, trying to live a good and honest life, according to the values of each, and usually failing. Tragedy occurs because the values themselves turn out to be illusory or mistaken, or because they are betrayed by weakness within or external malice or the intractability of objective facts. But even failure is redeemed by truth-seeing, by having the ability to perceive the truth and the courage to stare it in the face. Hemingway's characters stand or fall by whether they are truthful or not. Truth is the essential ingredient of his prose and is the one thread that runs right through his ethical system, its principle of coherence.

Having created his style and his ethic, Hemingway necessarily found himself living both. He became, as it were, the victim, the prisoner, the slave of his own imagination, forced to enact it in real life. His pursuit of "real" life, the life of action, was an intellectual activity in the sense that it was vital to his kind of fiction. As the hero Robert Jordan says in the Spanish war novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), he "liked to know how it really was; not how it was supposed to be." Hemingway, the intellectual obsessed by violent action, was a real person. A perceptive colleague on the Toronto *Star* summed him up at twenty: "A more weird combination of quivering sensitiveness and preoccupation with violence never walked the earth." He enjoyed all his father's outdoor pursuits and more—skiing, deep-sea fishing, big-game hunting, and not least, war. There was no doubt about his courage, on occasion. The New York *Times* reporter Herbert Matthews described how Hemingway, during the Ebro river battle in 1938, saved him from drowning in the rapids, by an extraordinary exhibition of strength: "He was a good man in a pinch." The white hunters who took him on safari in East Africa, often a good test, bore similar witness. Moreover Hemingway's courage was not unthinking and instinctive but cerebral. He had an acute sense of danger, as many anecdotes testify. He knew what it was to feel afraid and conquer his fear—no writer ever described cowardice more vividly. He made the reader sense his willingness to live his fiction.

This was why Hemingway's action-man image grew as quickly as his fame. Like many other intellectuals, from Rousseau onward, he had a striking talent for self-publicity. He created the physical Hemingway persona, reversing the old, soft-velvet, relaxed image of the Romantics, which had done such yeoman service in its time, in favor of a new he-man appeal: safari suits, bandoliers, guns, peaked cap, a whiff of powder, tobacco, whiskey. One of his obsessions was adding a few years to his age. In the 1920's he quickly promoted himself to "Papa"; the latest girl became "daughter." By the early 1940's "Papa" Hemingway was already a familiar figure in the picture magazines, as famous as the leading Hollywood males. No writer in history ever gave more interviews and photo opportunities. In time his white-bearded face became better known than Tolstoy's.

But in trying to personify his ethic and live up to the legend he created, Hemingway was also mounting a treadmill, from which he would not allow himself to descend till death. Rather as his mother saw maternal love in the shape of a bank account, Hemingway was constantly depositing experience of action to his credit, then drawing on it for his fiction. His Italian war, 1917-18, was his initial capital. During the 1920's he used up most of it, balancing the drain by frenzied sportsmanship and bullfighting. In the 1930's he made valuable deposits of big-game hunting, and the huge windfall of the Spanish Civil War. But he was slothful at exploiting the opportunities of World War II and his belated involvement in it added little to his writing capital. Thereafter his chief deposits were hunting and fishing; his attempts to retrace his steps on the big-game shooting and bullfighting circuits bore more farce than fruit. Edmund Wilson noted the contrast, both in the writing and the activity: "The young master and the old impostor." The truth is, Hemingway continued to enjoy some of his violent pursuits, but not quite so much as he claimed. There was a perceptible decline in zest for the wilderness, as though he would willingly, if only he dared, hang up his rifle and settle down in his library. A false, forced, boastful note crept into his situation reports to his publisher, Charles Scribner. Thus in 1949 he wrote to him: "To celebrate my fiftieth birthday . . . I fucked three times, shot ten straight pigeons (very fast ones) at the club, drank with

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friends a case of Piper Heidsieck brut and looked the ocean for big fish all afternoon."

TRUE? False? An exaggeration? One does not know. None of Hemingway's statements about himself, and very few he made about other people, can ever be accepted as fact without corroboration. Despite the central importance of truth in his fictional ethic, he had the characteristic intellectual's belief that, in his own case, truth must be the willing servant of his ego. He thought, and sometimes boasted, that lying was part of his training as a writer. He lied both consciously and without thinking. He certainly knew he was lying on occasion, as he makes clear in his fascinating tale, "Soldier's Home," with its character of Krebs. "It is not *unnatural* that the best writers are liars," he wrote. "A major part of their trade is to lie or invent. . . . They often lie unconsciously and then remember their lies with deep remorse." But the evidence shows that Hemingway habitually lied long before he worked out a professional apologia for it. He lied when he was five, claiming to have stopped a bolting horse unaided. He told his parents he had become engaged to the movie actress Mae Marsh, though he had never set eyes on her except in *Birth of a Nation*; he repeated this lie to his Kansas City colleagues, down to the detail of a $150 engagement ring. Many of these blatant lies were transparent and embarrassing as when, aged eighteen, he told friends he had caught a fish he had obviously bought in the market. He told an elaborate story about being a professional boxer in Chicago, having his nose broken but nonetheless going on fighting. He invented Indian blood for himself and even claimed he had Indian daughters. His autobiography, *A Moveable Feast*, is quite unreliable and, like Rousseau's *Confessions*, most dangerous when it appears to be frank. He was usually mendacious about his parents and sisters, sometimes for no apparent reason. Thus he said his sister Carol had been raped, aged twelve, by a sex pervert (quite untrue) and later claimed she was divorced or even dead (she was happily married to a Mr. Gardiner, whom Hemingway disliked).

Many of Hemingway's most complicated and reiterated lies concern his World War I service. Of course most soldiers, even brave ones, lie about their wars, and the degree of detailed investigation Hemingway's life has been subjected to was bound to turn up some malpractice with the truth. All the same, Hemingway's inventions about what happened in Italy are unusually brazen. In the first place he said he volunteered for the army but was rejected because of poor eyesight. This does not appear in the records and is most unlikely. He was in fact a noncombatant, and by choice. On many occasions, including newspaper interviews, he said he had served in the Italian 69th Infantry Regiment and had fought in three major battles. He also claimed he had belonged to the crack Arditi regiment, and he told his British military friend, "Chink" Dorman-Smith, that he had led an Arditi charge on Mount Grappa and had been badly wounded during it. He told his Spanish Civil War friend, General Gustavo Duran, that he had commanded first a company, then a battalion, when he was only nineteen. He had indeed been wounded—there was no doubt about that—but he lied repeatedly about the occasion and nature of the injury. He invented a story about being shot in the scrotum, not once but twice, and said he had had to rest his testicles on a pillow. He said he had been knocked down twice by machine-gun fire and hit thirty-two times by .45 bullets. And as a bonus, he said he had been baptized a Catholic on what the nurses believed was his deathbed. All these statements were untrue.

If war brought out the liar in Hemingway, so did sex. One of his choicest Italian tales, often repeated, was being held sexual prisoner by a Sicilian woman hotel owner who hid his clothes so that he was forced to fornicate with her for a week. He told Bernard Berenson (the recipient of many mendacious letters) that when he finished *The Sun Also Rises*, he brought a girl home, his wife came back suddenly, and he was forced to smuggle the girl out through the roof; no truth in it at all. He lied about his famous jealous fight with "that kike [Harold] Loeb" in Pamplona in 1925, saying that Loeb had a gun and threatened to shoot him (the incident was transfigured in *The Sun Also Rises*). He lied about all his marriages, divorces, and settlements, both to the women concerned and to his mother. His lies to, and about, his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, were particularly audacious. She, in turn, dismissed him as "the biggest liar since Munchausen." As with some other novelist-liars, Hemingway left false trails: some of his most striking stories, seemingly autobiographical by overwhelming internal evidence, may be pure inventions. All one can say is that Hemingway had little respect for the truth.

IN CONSEQUENCE he was apt and ready for that "low, dishonest decade," the 1930's. Hemingway never held any set of political convictions with consistency; his ethic was really about personal loyalties. His one-time friend Dos Passos thought that as a young man, Hemingway "had one of the shrewdest heads for unmasking political pretensions I've ever run into." But it is hard to find much evidence for this assertion. In the 1932 election Hemingway supported the Socialist, Eugene Debs. But by 1935 he had become a willing exponent of the Communist party line on most issues. In the September 17, 1935 issue of the CP paper *New Masses*, he contributed a violent article, "Who Killed the Vets?," blaming the government for the deaths, in a Florida hurricane, of 450 ex-servicemen railway workers em-

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ployed on federal projects—a typical exercise in CP agitprop. Hemingway's view, throughout the decade, seems to have been that the Communist party was the only legitimate and trustworthy conductor of the anti-fascist crusade, and that criticism of it, or participation in activities outside its control, was treachery. He said that anyone who took an anti-Communist line was "either a fool or a knave," and he would not allow his name to appear on the masthead of the new left-wing magazine *Ken*, launched by *Esquire*, when he discovered it was not a CP vehicle.

This approach governed his response to the Spanish Civil War, which he welcomed on professional grounds as a source of material—"Civil war is the best war for a writer, the most complete." But, curiously in view of his ethical code, which made elaborate provision for conflicts of loyalties, the power of tradition, and different concepts of justice, he accepted, from start to finish, the CP line on the war in all its crudity. He paid four visits to the front (spring and autumn 1937, spring and autumn 1938), but even before he left New York he had decided what the Civil War was all about and was already signed up for a propaganda film, *Spain in Flames*, with Dos Passos, Lillian Hellman, and Archibald MacLeish. "My sympathies," he wrote, "are always for exploited working people against absentee landlords even if I drink around with the landlords and shoot pigeons with them." The Communists were "the people of this country" and the war was a struggle between "the people" and "the absentee landlords, the Moors, the Italians, and the Germans." He said he liked and respected the Spanish Communist party, who were "the best people" in the war.

It was Hemingway's line, in accordance with CP policy, to play down the role of the Soviet Union, especially in directing the Spanish CP's ferocious conduct in the blood-stained internal politics of Republican Spain. This led him into a shameful breach with Dos Passos. Dos Passos's interpreter was José Robles, a former Johns Hopkins University professor who had joined the Republican forces on the outbreak of war and was a friend of Andres Nin, head of the anarchist POUM. He had also been interpreter to General Jan Antonovic Berzin, head of the Soviet military mission in Spain, and therefore knew some of the secrets of Moscow's dealings with the Madrid Defense Ministry. Berzin had been murdered by Stalin, who later gave orders to the Spanish CP to liquidate the POUM too. Nin was tortured to death, hundreds of others were arrested, accused of fascist activities, and executed. It was thought prudent to accuse Robles of spying, and he was secretly shot.

Dos Passos became worried about Robles's disappearance. Hemingway, who saw himself as an ultra-sophisticate in political matters and Dos Passos as a naive newcomer, pooh-poohed his anxieties. Hemingway was staying at Gaylord's Hotel in Madrid, then the haunt of the CP bosses, and asked his crony Pepe Quintanilla (who, it later emerged, was responsible for most CP executions) what had happened. He was assured Robles was alive and well, under arrest to be sure, but certain to get a fair trial. Hemingway believed this and told Dos Passos.

In fact Robles was already dead, and when Hemingway belatedly found this out—from a journalist who had only just arrived in Madrid—he told Dos Passos that it was clear Robles had been as guilty as hell and only a fool could think otherwise. Dos Passos, greatly distressed, refused to accept Robles's guilt and publicly attacked the Communists. This brought from Hemingway the rebuke: "A war is being fought in Spain between the people whose side you used to be on and the fascists. If with your hatred of the Communists you feel justified in attacking, for money, the people who are still fighting the war, I think you should at least try to get your facts right." But Dos Passos, as it turned out, had got his facts right: Hemingway was the naif, the innocent, the dupe.

And such he remained, until the end of the war and for some time afterward. His work for the Communists reached its climax on June 4, 1937 when he spoke at the Second Writers' Congress, which the American CP, through a front organization, held in New York at Carnegie Hall. Hemingway's point was that writers had to fight fascism because it was the only regime which would not allow them to tell the truth; intellectuals had a duty to go to Spain and do something there themselves—they should stop arguing doctrinal points in their armchairs and start fighting: "There is now, and there will be for a long time, war for any writer to go to who wants to study it."

Hemingway was certainly a dupe. But he was also consciously participating in a lie, since it is clear from his novel about the Spanish war, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, that he was aware of the dark side of the Republican cause, and had probably known some of the truth about the Spanish CP all along. But he did not publish the book until 1940, when it was all over. So long as the Civil War lasted, Hemingway took the same line as those who tried to suppress George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, that truth came a long way behind political and military expediency. His speech to the Writers' Congress was thus completely fraudulent.

It was odd in another way too, since Hemingway showed no inclination to follow his own advice and "study war." When America's involvement in the crusade aginst Nazism began in earnest in 1941, he did not join it. By now he had acquired for himself a home, the Finca Vigia, outside Havana in Cuba, which remained his chief residence for most of his remaining years. The

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success of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which became one of the great best-sellers of the century, brought him an enormous income and he wanted to enjoy it, notably in what was now his preferred sport, deep-sea fishing.

For a man whose code and whose fiction exalted the virtues of friendship, Hemingway—as his relations with Dos Passos showed—found it curiously difficult to sustain any for long. His quarrels with fellow writers were particularly vicious. Hemingway was unusually jealous, even by the standards of literary life, of the talent and success of others. By 1937 he had quarreled with every writer he knew. There was one notable exception, which reflects highly on him. The only writer he did not attack in his autobiography was Ezra Pound, and from first to last he wrote approvingly of him. From their first acquaintance he admired Pound's unselfish kindness to other writers. He took from Pound the sharp criticism he would accept from no one, including the shrewd advice in 1926 that he should get down to a novel rather than publish another volume of stories, expressed characteristically: "Wotter yer think yer are, a bloomink DILLYtante?" He seems to have admired in Pound a virtue he knew he himself conspicuously lacked, a complete absence of professional jealousy.

Hemingway also avoided a quarrel with Joyce, perhaps because of lack of opportunity or perhaps because he continued to admire his work, once calling him "the only alive writer that I ever respected." For the rest it was a sad tale. He quarreled with Ford Madox Ford, Sinclair Lewis, Gertrude Stein, Max Eastman, Dorothy Parker, Harold Loeb, Archibald MacLeish, and many others. His literary quarrels brought out a peculiar streak of brutal malice as well as his propensity to lie. Indeed many of his worst lies concerned other writers. In his autobiography, he told a string of lies about F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda. Zelda had punctured Hemingway's ego, but Fitzgerald had admired and liked him and done him no harm; Hemingway's repeated assaults on this fragile and bruised spirit are difficult to understand, except in terms of an unappeasable jealousy. According to Hemingway, Fitzgerald told him: "You know I never slept with anyone except Zelda. . . . Zelda said that the way I was built I could never make any woman happy and that was what upset her." The two then went into a men's room and Fitzgerald took out his penis for inspection; Hemingway generously reassured him: "You're perfectly fine." This episode seems to be a piece of fiction.

But Hemingway's most malevolent quarrel was with Dos Passos, particularly painful in view of their long acquaintance. Jealousy was clearly the original motive—Dos Passos made the cover of *Time* magazine in 1936 (Hemingway had to wait another year). Then came the Robles incident in Spain, followed by a row in New York with both Dos Passos and his wife Katy, an even older friend. Hemingway called Dos Passos a bum who borrowed money and never repaid it, and his wife a kleptomaniac; and there was a lot of sneering about his Portuguese ancestry and supposed illegitimate birth. Hemingway tried to insert these libels into *To Have and Have Not* (1937) but was obliged by his publishers, on legal advice, to cut them. He unleashed a last quiver of darts at Dos Passos in *A Moveable Feast*—Dos Passos was a vicious pilot-fish who led sharks like Gerald Murphy to their prey and he had succeeded in destroying Hemingway's first marriage.

The last assertion was palpably false since Hemingway needed no help in destroying his marriages. In his fiction he often wrote about women with remarkable understanding. He shared with Kipling a gift of varying his habitual masculine approach with unexpected and highly effective presentation of a female viewpoint. There have been all kind of speculations about a feminine, even a transvestite or transsexual, streak in Hemingway, arising from his apparent obsession with hair, especially short hair in women, and attributed to the fact that his mother declined to dress him in boy's clothes and kept his hair uncut for an unusually long time. What is clear, however, is that Hemingway found it difficult to form any kind of civilized relationship with a woman, at any rate for long, except one based on her complete subservience.

As it happens, three out of his four wives were unusually servile by 20th-century American standards, but that was not enough for him. He wanted variety, change, drama as well. His first wife, Hadley Richardson, was eight years older and quite well off; he lived off her money until his books began to sell in large quantities. She was an agreeable, accommodating woman, and attractive until she put on weight while pregnant with Hemingway's first child, Jack ("Bumby"), and failed to get it off afterward. Hemingway had no scruples about fondling other women in her presence—as, for instance, the notorious Lady Twysden, born Dorothy Smurthwaite, who figures as Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises*, a Montparnasse flirt and the source of his row with Harold Loeb. Hadley put up with this humiliation and later with Hemingway's affair with Pauline Pfeiffer, a sexy, slender girl, much richer than Hadley, whose father was one of the biggest landowners and grain operators in Arkansas. Pauline fell heavily for Hemingway and in effect seduced him. The loving pair then persuaded Hadley to permit the setting up of a *ménage à trois*—"three breakfast trays," she wrote bitterly from Juan-les-Pins in 1926, "three wet bathing suits on the line, three bicycles." When this did not content them, they pushed her out into a trial

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separation, then into a divorce. She accepted, writing to Hemingway: "I took you for better, for worse (and meant it)."

Pauline, for her part, used her money to make their life more ample, buying and embellishing a fine house in Key West, Florida, which introduced Hemingway to the deep-sea fishing he came to love. She gave him a son, Patrick, but when in 1931 she announced she was having another child (Gregory), the marriage went into decline. By now Hemingway had acquired his taste for Havana and there he took up with a strawberry blonde, Jane Mason, wife of the head of Pan American Airways in Cuba, fourteen years his junior. She was slim, pretty, hard-drinking, a first-class sportswoman who enjoyed hanging around with Hemingway's barroom chums, then driving sports cars at reckless speed. She was in many ways an ideal Hemingway heroine, but she was also a depressive who could not handle her complicated life. She tried to commit suicide and succeeded in breaking her back, at which point Hemingway lost interest.

In the meantime Pauline had taken desperate steps to win back her husband. But being a man who felt guilt but who responded by shifting it onto other people, he now held her responsible for breaking up his first marriage and therefore felt she deserved anything that was coming to her.

What came was Martha Gellhorn, a passionately keen reporter and writer, Bryn Mawr-educated (like Hadley) and, as with most of Hemingway's women, from a secure, upper-middle-class Midwest background. She was tall, with spectacular long legs, a blue-eyed blonde, nearly ten years his junior. Hemingway first met her in Sloppy Joe's Bar, Key West, in December 1936, and the next year invited her to join him in Spain. She did so, and the experience was an eye-opener, not least because he greeted her with a lie: "I knew you'd get here, Daughter, because I fixed it up so you could"—this was quite untrue, as she was aware. He also insisted on locking her room from the outside, "so that no man could bother her." His own room at the Hotel Ambos Mundos, she discovered, was in a disgusting mess: "Ernest," she wrote later, "was extremely dirty . . . one of the most unfastidious men I have ever known."

Martha was easily the cleverest and most determined of his wives, and there was never any chance of the marriage lasting. For one thing, she objected strongly to his drinking and the brutality it engendered. When, at the end of 1942, she insisted on driving the car home because he had been drinking at a party, and they had an argument on the way, he slapped her with the back of his hand. She slowed down his much-prized Lincoln, drove it straight into a tree, then left him in it. Then there was the dirt: she complained about the pack of fierce tomcats he kept in Cuba, which smelled fearfully and were allowed to march all over the dining table. She corrected his French pronunciation, challenged his expertise on French wines, and hinted broadly that he ought to be closer to the fighting in Europe. He finally decided to go, cunningly arranging an assignment with *Collier's*, which had been employing her and now, to her fury, dropped her. She followed him to London nonetheless and found him, in 1944, living in his customary squalor at the Dorchester, empty whiskey bottles rolling about under his bed.

From then on it was downhill all the way. Back in Cuba, he would wake her in the middle of the night when he came to bed after drinking: "He woke me when I was trying to sleep to bully, snarl, mock—my crime really was to have been at war when he had not, but that was not how he put it. I was supposedly insane, I only wanted excitement and danger, I had no responsibility to anyone, I was selfish beyond belief. It never stopped and believe me it was fierce and ugly." He threatened: "Going to get me somebody who wants to stick around with me and let *me* be the writer of the family." He wrote an obscene poem, "To Martha Gellhorn's Vagina," which he compared to the wrinkled neck of an old hot-water bottle, and which he read to any woman he could get into bed with him. He became, she complained, "progressively more insane each year." She was leading "a slave's life with a brute for a slave owner," and she walked out at the end of 1944. Under Cuban law, since she had deserted, Hemingway kept all her property there.

HEMINGWAY'S fourth and final marriage endured to his death, mainly because his protagonist this time, Mary Welsh, was determined to hang on whatever happened. She came from a different class from the earlier wives, a logger's daughter from Minnesota. She can have had no illusions about the man she was marrying, since right at the start of their relationship, at the Paris Ritz in February 1945, he got drunk, came across a photo of her Australian journalist husband, Noel Monks, hurled it down the lavatory, fired at it with his submachine gun, smashed the entire apparatus, and flooded the room. Mary was a journalist on *Time*, not an ambitious high-flyer like Martha, but hard-working and shrewd. Realizing that Hemingway wanted a wife-servant rather than a competitor, she gave up her journalism completely to marry him, though she continued to have to endure sneers such as "*I* haven't fucked generals in order to get a story for *Time* magazine." He called her "Papa's Pocket Venus" and boasted of the number of times he had intercourse with her: he told General Lanham that, after a period of neglect, it was easy to pacify Mary as he had "irrigated her four times the night before" (when Lanham asked her about this after Hemingway's death she sighed, "If only it were true").

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Mary was a determined woman, a manager; there was something of Countess Tolstoy about her. By this time, of course, Hemingway was as world-famous as Tolstoy, a seer of manliness, a prophet of the outdoors, with drinks, guns, safari clothes, camping gear of all kinds named after him. Wherever he went, in Spain, in Africa, above all in Cuba, he was attended by a court of cronies and freeloaders, sometimes a traveling circus, in Havana usually static.

There were, too, the repetitive, often deliberate, humiliations. Hemingway loved the attentions of women, particularly if they were glamorous, famous, and flattering. There was Marlene "The Kraut" Dietrich, who sang to him in his bathroom while he shaved, Lauren Bacall ("You're even bigger than I'd imagined"), Nancy "Slim" Hayward ("Darling, you're so thin and beautiful"). There was Virginia "Jigee" Viertel, part of Hemingway's Paris circus at the Ritz. In Madrid there were Hemingway's "whores de combat" as he called them, in Havana the waterfront tarts; he liked to fondle them in Mary's presence, as he had once fondled Dorothy Twysden under Hadley's worried gaze. As he grew older, the girls he wanted grew younger. Hemingway once told Malcolm Cowley, "I have fucked every woman I wanted to fuck and many I did not, and fucked them all well I hope." This was never true, and became less true after World War II. In Venice he became infatuated with a young woman, both dreadful and pathetic, called Adriana Ivancich, whom he made the heroine of his disastrous postwar novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950). Adriana sneered at Mary as "uncultured," a judgment echoed by Hemingway himself, who praised the young woman's breeding and civilized ways, drawing the contrast with Mary whom he termed a "camp-follower" and a "scavenger."

Hemingway wrote a "situation report" on Mary at one stage which listed her qualities: "An excellent cook, a good judge of wine, an excellent gardener . . . can run a boat or a household in Spanish." But he had no sympathy when, as often happened, she injured herself in his wilderness expeditions. There were shattering rows in public, scenes of frightening violence in private. On one occasion he hurled her typewriter to the ground, broke an ashtray she prized, threw wine in her face, and called her a slut.

HEMINGWAY'S son Gregory noted in his book: "It's fine to be under the influence of a dominating personality as long as he's healthy, but when he gets dry rot of the soul, how do you bring yourself to tell him he stinks?"

The truth, of course, is that Hemingway did not suffer from dry rot of the soul. He was an alcoholic. His alcholism was as important, indeed central, to his life and work as drug addiction was to Coleridge. Hemingway was a classic textbook case of progressive alcoholism, provoked by deep-seated, chronic, and probably inherited depression, and aggravating it in turn. He once told MacLeish: "Trouble was, all my life when things were really bad I could take a drink and right away they were much better." He began to drink as a teen-ager, the local blacksmith Jim Dilworth, secretly supplying him with strong cider. His mother noted his habit and always feared he would become an alcoholic (there is a theory that his heavy drinking started with his first big row with Grace). In Italy he progressed to wine, then had his first hard liquor at the officers' club in Milan. His wound and an unhappy love affair provoked heavy drinking: in the hospital, his wardrobe was found to be full of empty cognac bottles, an ominous sign. In Paris in the 1920's, he bought Beaune by the gallon at a wine cooperative, and would and did drink five or six bottles of red at a meal. He taught Scott Fitzgerald to drink wine direct from the bottle which, he said, was like "a girl going swimming without her swimming suit." In New York he was "cockeyed," he said, for "several days" after signing his contract for *The Sun Also Rises*, probably his first prolonged bout. He was popularly supposed to have invented the 20's phrase, "Have a drink"; though some accused him of being mean about offering one and Hemingway, in turn, was always liable to accuse acquaintances of free-loading.

Hemingway particularly liked to drink with women, as this seemed to him, vicariously, to signify his mother's approval. Hadley drank a lot with him, and wrote: "I still cherish, you know, the remark you made that you almost worshipped me as a drinker." The same disastrous role was played by his pretty 30's companion in Havana, Jane Mason, with whom he drank gin followed by champagne chasers and huge jars of iced daiquiris; it was indeed in Cuba in this decade that his drinking first got completely out of hand. One bartender there said he could "drink more martinis than any man I have ever seen." On safari, he was seen sneaking out of his tent at 5 A.M. to get a drink. His brother Leicester said that, by the end of the 1930's, at Key West, he was drinking seventeen Scotch-and-sodas a day, and often taking a bottle of champagne to bed with him at night.

At this period, his liver for the first time began to cause him acute pain. He was told by his doctor to give up alcohol completely, and indeed tried to limit his consumption to three whiskeys before dinner. But that did not last. During World War II his drinking mounted steadily and by the mid-1940's he was reported pouring gin into his tea at breakfast. A.E. Hotchner, interviewing him for *Cosmopolitan* in 1948, said he dispatched seven double-size Papa Doubles (the Havana drink named after him, a mixture of rum, grapefruit, and maraschino), and when he left for dinner took an eighth with him for the drive. He claimed: "Made a run of sixteen here one night." He boasted to his publisher that had he begun an

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evening with absinthe, dispatched a bottle of wine at dinner, switched to a vodka session, then "battened it down with whiskeys and soda till 3 A.M." His pre-dinner drinks in Cuba were usually rum-based, in Europe martinis, at fifteen-to-one strength. Once, in the early 1950's, I watched him down six of these in quick succession—there was a strong element of public bravado in his drinking—on the terrace outside the Dôme in Montparnasse. His breakfast drinks might be gin, champagne, Scotch, or "Death in the Gulf Stream," a big glass of Hollands gin and lime, another of his inventions. And on top of all, there was constant whiskey: his son Patrick said his father got through a quart of whiskey a day for the last twenty years of his life.

Hemingway's ability to hold his liquor was remarkable. Lillian Ross, who wrote his profile for the *New Yorker*, does not seem to have noticed he was drunk a lot of the time he talked to her. Denis Zaphiro said of his last safari: "I suppose he was drunk the whole time but seldom showed it." He also demonstrated an unusual ability to cut down his drinking or even to eliminate it altogether for brief periods, and this, in addition to his strong physique, enabled him to survive.

But despite his physique, his alcoholism had a direct impact on his health beginning with his damaged liver in the late 1930's. By 1959, following his last big drinking bout in Spain, he was experiencing both kidney and liver trouble and possibly haemochromatosis (cirrhosis, bronzed skin, diabetes), edema of the ankles, cramps, chronic insomnia, blood-clotting and high blood uremia, as well as his skin complaints. He was impotent and prematurely aged; the last, sad photograph taken of him, walking near a house he had bought in Idaho, tells its own tale. Even so, he was still on his feet, still alive; and the thought had become unbearable to him. His father had committed suicide because of his fear of mortal illness. Hemingway feared that his illnesses were not mortal: on July 2, 1961, after various unsuccessful treatments for depression and paranoia, he got hold of his best English double-barreled shotgun, put two canisters in it, and blew away his entire cranial vault.

WHY did Hemingway long for death? It is by no means unusual among writers. His contemporary Evelyn Waugh, a writer in English of comparable stature during this period, likewise longed for death. But Waugh was not an intellectual: he did not think he could refashion the rules of life out of his own head but submitted to the traditional discipline of his church, dying of natural causes five years later. Hemingway created his own code, based on honor, truth, loyalty. He failed it on all three counts, and it failed him.

More seriously, perhaps, he felt he was failing his art. Hemingway had many grievous faults but there was one thing he did not lack: artistic integrity. It shines like a beacon through his whole life. He set himself the task of creating a new way of writing English, and fiction, and he succeeded. It was one of the salient events in the history of our language and is now an inescapable part of it. He devoted to this task immense resources of creative skill, energy, and patience. That in itself was difficult. But far more difficult, as he discovered, was to maintain the high creative standards he had set himself. This became apparent to him in the mid-1930's, and added to his habitual depression. From then on his few successful stories were aberrations in a long downward slide. If Hemingway had been less of an artist, it might not have mattered to him as a man; he would simply have written and published inferior novels, as many writers do. But he knew when he wrote below his best, and the knowledge was intolerable to him. He sought the help of alcohol, even in working hours. He was first observed with a drink, a "Rum St. James," in front of him while writing in the 1920's. This custom, rare at first, became intermittent, then invariable. By the 1940's, he was said to wake at 4.30 A.M., "usually starts drinking right away and writes standing up, with a pencil in one hand and a drink in another." The effect on his work was exactly as might be expected, disastrous. Hemingway began to produce large quantities of unpublishable material, or material he felt did not reach the minimum standard he set himself. Some was published nonetheless, and was seen to be inferior, even a parody of his earlier work. There were one or two exceptions, notably *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), which won him the Nobel Prize, though there was an element of self-parody in that, too. But the general level was low, and falling, and Hemingway's awareness of his inability to recapture his genius, let alone develop it, accelerated the spinning circle of depression and drink. He was a man killed by his art, and his life holds a lesson all intellectuals need to learn: that art is not enough.

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Oral History

A Story

Allegra Goodman

Rose Markowitz volunteers once a week for the Venice Oral History project. They send her a girl, Alma, on Mondays and Rose tells her the details of her life. It can be tedious but it is important that it be done. "The irony is not lost on me," she tells her son Edward when he calls.

She is an attractive girl, though she walks around in rags. They all wear them, of course. Rose sees them advertised in the catalogues. She gets them all. Ninety-nine percent schlock for twice the money. The bargains, so-called, are the worst. You could take the prices, but for that merchandise! Rose sits and waits every week and she can never predict what Alma will wear. Never the same rags twice; she doesn't iron. A divorcée, of course, is what she is. She told Rose herself. Last time she wore earrings made out of scrap metal. She has two holes pierced in each ear. But really, apart from that and her hair, she would be a nice-looking girl. No raving beauty, but she has feminine hands, and Rose is very particular about hands.

It was the first thing Rose disliked about her own Ed's wife. Even in the wedding pictures she had the most ungainly, thick-fingered hands. The photographs are all away in boxes except for the pair on the secretary. Those were the boys in their angelic days. Two and five. She took out the old pictures of the family for the research project. The other things left from the old house are the sofa and the Chinese carpet, green. That was the first thing she bought when she worked in Macy's Ladies' Dresses. The second thing was the beveled-glass mirror which broke. The mounting was loose and it fell one night with such a smash Rose was trembling for a week. The dining-room table and the six chairs Ed forced her to leave behind because in Venice she got a studio at the senior citizens' residence. But the nesting Chinese tables came as a set with the wing chair and the cloisonné lamps. Rose's other son Henry wanted them, but Rose took them back when he moved to England. He uprooted her from Flatbush so he could leave her alone in California. He moved to England within three years of her coming and she told him when he left her he wasn't taking the lamps back there. Rose put them on the chifferobe beside the bed. For reading she bought a seventy-watt lamp.

Alma saunters in with her hair windblown. "Sit, sit," Rose urges, and she sinks down, folders denting cushions. It annoys and fascinates Rose, the way she flings herself about. If you asked her she would tell you Alma doesn't know what manners are. But Rose enjoys disapproving of her. She always loved an impossible child. Even now that Henry's grown and only impossible, he is her favorite.

The girl shuffles the files about and rewinds something in the tape recorder before she even asks "How are you?"

Rose considers the question. "I feel fragile. And you?"

"Great." They look at each other for a moment. Wrinkled again, Rose observes mildly. She turns down the volume on the clock-radio, miniaturizing an Ives symphony. Alma watches, squinting. The white afternoon sun still burns in her eyes, blinding her to the shadowy contours of the apartment.

"You look ill, dear." Rose says. "You look flushed."

"Sunburn. Not to worry."

"I was always so very fair," says Rose.

Alma breaks in. "At our last session, you spoke about your childhood. Maybe we can pick up from there. Back before World War I. How did you manage to survive, domestically, under the great oppression?"

Rose settles back in her chair, revealing the knee bands of her tan stockings. "I'll tell you about the Depression. That was when we lived in the Brooklyn house. Thank God we had the house." She waves her hand mystically over the maze of furniture. The secretary especially was an agony to move. They had to take out the louvers and hoist it through the window. Rose had a time of it. She was wringing her hands waiting for it to

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Allegra Goodman, a senior at Harvard, has previously published five stories in Commentary. All these stories, as well as the present one, will appear in Miss Goodman's forthcoming collection, *Total Immersion*, which Harper & Row is bringing out in May; the title story appeared in our October 1987 issue.

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come through and she was certain the men wouldn't see the finials on the top.

"*Before* the Depression," Alma urges, "I want to talk about prewar oppression. How did your mother bear up? Where did you live?"

"Well, the war was dirty and dangerous. I would never go back to Vienna. Never, *never.* I was sent to England and became very English. All I can remember of Vienna is filth."

Alma leans forward. "Can you be more specific? This is very important for the project."

"Alma," Rose murmurs, "I said I would help you, but some things should be forgotten."

"Try to remember. You're like a witness to those times—to that suffering."

"Oh, nonsense," Rose scoffs. Even so, she smiles, touched by Alma's interest in her life.

"I need your cooperation."

"Well," Rose says sweetly, "we'll make something up, dear. The university will never know."

"Mrs. Markowitz!" There is something in Rose that baffles Alma. Something blithe and cunningly oblivious. She tries again. "All right, I'd like to rephrase my first question in a less technical way. When I speak of the oppression, here's what I mean. As a member of the European, rising bourgeoisie and as a woman, did you feel that your ambition was stifled in Vienna?"

"I was a *little girl*!" Rose protests. "This is before the first war, remember. Don't make me out a *completely* desiccated old fool. Besides, we were Jewish. That's why we came here."

"So you were really part of the Jewish intellectual elite. Is that a good description of the family?"

"I had six brothers," Rose says thoughtfully. "Some were smart, some weren't. Joseph, yes. Joel, yes." She ticks them off on her fingers. "Saul, no. Mendel, yes. Nachum—died too young. Chaim, smart? *Definitely* not—may he rest in peace. He had a heart of gold. Maybe half the family was elite, the rest, not."

"Well, I meant economically. Anyway, let's move on."

"Economically, we had the house," Rose supplies. "That was what saved the family."

"In Vienna?"

"No, *here.* In America. The city. Brooklyn. I was the baby. They sent me to Hunter College, but fortunately I married Samuel halfway through. A horrendous place. You see, I never knew any mathematics. Couldn't add two numbers together. It was because of the way I was brought up."

"Ah," breathes Alma. "As a woman, you were socialized to be afraid of numbers."

"Well, they tried to teach me, but they gave up because I was so stupid."

"You thought you were stupid?"

"No. Artistic. I sewed dresses. My life goal was to go on a transatlantic cruise. Which I did. Several times."

"So you aspired to the upper classes," Alma concludes.

"Oh, we were upper class. My brother was a teacher. We went to college. My sister-in-law painted, played the piano. We spoke German and French. We were very cultured people. Our home in Vienna was a beautiful work of art. In Brooklyn we lived even better."

"Whoa," cries Alma. "In my notes from last session you said you only knew poverty and hunger."

"That's nonsense."

"You've changed your mind since last week?"

Rose lifts her chin. "Are you saying I can't remember what I said a week ago?"

"No," Alma groans, "I'm trying to compile a consistent record."

"I am consistent."

"Well, which is the truth?" Alma demands. "Were you poor and ignorant or were you cultured?"

Rose folds her hands. "We were cultured at heart."

STARTING the car, Alma glares at the Venice Vista condominiums, their avocado-green walls and cement paths under date palms. Every week Rose changes her mind about when she left Vienna. They all have their tricks, of course, the women of Venice and Mar Vista, the retired piano teacher in the Valley. But the others trail their gambits more predictably: Eileen with her great-grandchildren, Simone and her long recipes. Rose is more subtle than this, more eloquently inconsistent.

She drives past Venice Beach and thinks how the old ladies on park benches used to inspire her. She went to see *Venice People* while still in Romance languages at Berkeley and it struck her then that this was what she wanted. She was tired of insinuating meaning from fiction. She needed to read lives, not texts. She needed to hear real voices. Her adviser tried to talk her out of switching programs. "You're doing brilliant work here!" Professor Garvey protested. "You'll write a publishable dissertation." But Alma had decided by this time that he was a fatuous, exploitative swine. So she left Garvey and his department and now field work replaces MLA computer searches. People replace books. Her mother is distressed by all this. She is distressed by Alma's graduate work in general. She pleads softly on the telephone from Palos Verdes, "Alma, why do you drive yourself like this? You don't have to go to school all over again. You're thirty-one years old and if you don't like your program you can just leave. There's no shame in that. Or take a year off and see how you feel."

"What would I do with a year off?" Alma demanded after one such speech.

"You don't need to do anything," her mother answered. "You could just come home and rest.

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Or we could travel together, just the two of us. You don't take care of yourself working like this." She didn't say anything about Alma's boyfriend, which was how Alma knew he was on her mind. Mom met him once and talked to him briefly but she never speaks *of* him, never utters his alliterative, flat Jewish name, Ron Rosenblatt.

Ignoring her mother's offer, Alma moved to Venice and bought the Toyota. She drives across Los Angeles interviewing. But work with live characters has its own frustrations. Alma's women never provide quite the testimony she is looking for. They record scant evidence about their time and instead fill cassettes with soap-opera reviews, reports of gastrointestinal symptoms, readings of their letters. Here again, Rose is the most dramatic, unfolding yellowed papers from her secretary, holding them close to the light as if some great historical record were at hand—all to reveal a thank-you note from her oldest brother's bride or, in last week's interview, a copy of her surreal letter "to the IRS." "My dear husband was a Maoist. Please excuse the lapse in taxes." Rose is worse than all the rest put together.

The apartment is almost as hot as the car. Alma's cocker spaniel Flush sprawls, ears drooping, on the couch. The dog is recovering from a virus. At the round table Ron works under the blast of a three-speed fan. He is writing a scholarly work on the folk singer John Jacob Niles, but lately he's been helping Alma with her data analysis. She wonders sometimes whether either project will ever get done. Though he loves gathering material, Ron has a laconic way of writing. He knows hundreds of ballads, but was already bored with writing about Niles when he and Alma met. The year before he had wanted to take his sabbatical in Appalachia and check Niles's sources, but Alma told him it was a ridiculous waste of time and she wasn't going to sacrifice her project for it. He grumbled for a while and wrote a chapter.

Now, Ron sits with Alma's transcripts before him, weighted down against the narrow breeze with ashtrays and glass coasters. "Darling," he says, "I don't think this stuff is usable."

Alma slams the door. "Don't darling me."

"Ms. Renquist," Ron rephrases. "This data is shitty."

"It's not my fault!" she sinks down next to Flush. "You should see what I have to work with. The way they change their stories. Rose Markowitz doesn't even seem to know whether she was rich or poor."

"But I can't see," says Ron, "that's the problem. I have no idea what these women are like. All I've got here are your interruptions. You've been asking all kinds of biased, leading questions."

"I'm just trying to guide the discussion," Alma retorts. "You want me to listen to them babble about constipation?"

"*Guiding*?" Ron pulls off his sweat-drenched shirt. "Look at these transcripts. Every other question is about class struggle. Come on, this is supposed to be a federally funded grant. This should be very straightforward: the lives of women before and after the wars."

"Are you telling me to sell out my methodology?" she bristles.

"Alma," he grips her by the shoulders, "use your head. These women don't know what you're talking about. First of all, stop trying to indoctrinate them. What does Eileen Meeker know about patriarchal power structures?"

She shakes him off. "Plenty."

"But not by that name."

She stamps into the kitchen. "It's my thesis," she calls out. "It's my idea. You think you can do a better job, you interview them."

"Yeah, why not," Ron growls from the other room. "Why not the interviews, too?"

"Come in here if you want to talk to me." She pours herself a glass of Chablis and feels some remorse, partly because Ron is right; she has been interrupting too much. It's an old habit. She's always worked to get a jump on arguments, to press her own conclusions. Even in high school Alma wouldn't let a statement lie unchallenged. She interrogated her classmates in discussion. After class, teachers would lecture her apologetically. They gestured with exhausted hands in front of the cloudy blackboards. "I know you're very bright, Alma. But you shouldn't act so dogmatic." Ron doesn't flare up the way she does. She dances around him in their arguments and he watches, infuriating her as if he were holding her by the wrists. It's better to back off than play his games. "Ron?" she leans in the kitchen doorway. "It's just so hard to sit there and listen to them. I get punchy."

"I know," he says. "Tell you what; I'm starving. Order a pizza."

She phones for a pizza with everything—anchovies on her half—and cannoli for dessert. They clear off the table and Alma folds her print-outs back into her rolling file cabinet. Ron complains that the apartment looks like a suite of offices, but Alma loves office furniture, the wall systems and built-in cabinets. She's attached corner fittings to the bookcases and nested drawers under the bed; she's installed folding tables, armless chairs, a layered printer stand, every kind of space saver. She indulges in the minimal. Ron's sprawling reel-to-reel tape player (needed for research) and his shaggy ferns look like loose cargo next to Alma's modules, units, nodes of furniture.

The pizza comes with double cheese, olives, mushrooms, onions, green peppers, and eggplant. Ron surveys the crust for Alma's anchovies and slices her a piece which she cuts neatly with a fork and knife. He lifts a long curling piece straight to his mouth trailing cheese. But the doorbell interrupts him. The delivery boy is back,

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standing in the doorway. "Can I use your phone?" he asks.

They can hear him talking in the kitchen. "Hi. It's John. Dad there? Hi. Fine. Two more. I, uh locked the keys in the car. I'm on Elk." A long pause and then he reappears, avoiding their eyes. Silently he walks down to wait in the parking lot.

"God," Ron says, "how embarrassing. Poor kid. You forget what it's like to get an earful like that."

"I don't," mutters Alma.

"Well," he teases, "if you hate interviewing so much, go back to Cervantes."

She sighs, "But I want to work with people!"

"As opposed to the rest of us?"

"Oh, you know what I mean. It's just Rose who gets to me. The woman is driving me crazy. I've never seen anyone play such games. One session tears and suffering. The next week she laughs and laughs."

"Maybe she's senile," Ron suggests cheerfully.

"No," moans Alma. "She's too damn manipulative."

"Poor kid," he stakes out another piece. "You've just never had an Aunt Rose, that's all. You don't have the background for old Jewish ladies. Caroling at rest homes in Palos Verdes just won't do it."

"Very funny," says Alma. "I did *not* go caroling."

"It was a metaphor. Let me tell you, though, you've got to fight Rose on her own ground. She gets emotional, play on her emotions. Don't analyze out loud, sit there and cry with her. She'll pour out her heart."

Alma looks at him.

"Trust me." Ron winks.

AT THE next session Alma tries. "We've been skipping around a lot," she tells Rose. "So I'd like to go back to your childhood. This time I'm going to try to talk less and let you talk more. Where did you live as a child?"

Rose picks off a dead leaf from her African violet. "We lived outside Vienna in a little house on the grounds of a castle. When the soldiers came, all us children and women were locked in the castle and one soldier had my mother roast them a pig! A whole pig! And then they left. Can you imagine?"

"How did you feel about that?" Alma asks.

"I just told you."

"I mean, beyond the bare facts. Emotionally. How did that make you feel? Didn't you feel violated when the soldiers came in? Do you still dream about it?"

Rose shakes her head. "This was *many* years ago."

"Yet you remember it so clearly!"

"No, actually," says Rose, "it's gotten very fuzzy in my mind."

"You're trying to forget it?"

"No, I just can't remember it that well. Alma, I haven't thought about this for years and years."

Alma glares at the needlepoint bird framed on the wall. "You're sublimating this."

"Pardon me?"

"You're purposely forgetting. Pushing it out of sight."

"Alma," Rose says gently, "when you forget something you don't *try*, you just—forget what happened."

"But can't you remember the feelings? Weren't you frightened?"

"I suppose we were."

"Couldn't you have gotten *killed*?" Alma bursts out. "I mean, really murdered. Raped, then murdered."

"Oh, definitely." Rose's voice quavers. "Sometimes when I think of the wars I could just cry."

Alma kneels at Rose's feet. "Yes! Yes!" she urges. "Go on."

"But I don't think about them very much."

What *does* she think about, Alma wonders, staring at Rose's shadowed eyes. In fact, Rose is thinking about her slipcovers. She regrets that she gave them up. For forty years they covered the sofa where Alma sits. Rose brought them with her from New York when she moved into the residence, but the same day, Gladys came to introduce herself and examine Rose's things (she was sharp as a whip to the last day, and mean) and she picked up the cover on the sofa: "Rose, what are you waiting for?" She embarrassed Rose into it. She wanted them for the flea market, Rose found out later. Gladys used to visit all the residents spying for the flea markets; they gave her awards. Now Rose has to keep the jalousies closed so the cushions won't fade.

Alma bends over her tape recorder. "Let's move on to the family you lived with in England during the war."

"She was a monster and became senile," Rose declares. "When they lost their money, she went mad because they couldn't afford plates."

"Plates?" Alma asks wearily.

"China, porcelain. She broke something every day. She threw plates across the dining room. But *he* was an angel. The only one who understood me. There was also the most cherubic little boy, Eli. With golden hair. I went back to see him in 1954. He was a great big hairy man. Horrible! I couldn't believe my eyes."

"Upper-middle-class industrialists," Alma mutters, writing in her notebook.

"They were very observant, that I know. We went to services every week. Alma—" Rose picks up the tape recorder— "I insist you turn off this ludicrous machine and take some cheese cake. Listen. In my day we were taught to eat. I was a size eighteen at your age." She sees Alma writing and amends, "Well, maybe sixteen. Come. *Sit*, dear. Just let me get the cake out of the Frigidaire.

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You know, I've always thought Alma was a lovely name."

"Really?" Alma looks up startled. "I hate it."

"Why?"

"Rose," says Alma, "are you trying to sidetrack me?"

"No, I'm really interested."

"Oh, I don't know." She rattles her notes. "It sounds so—spinsterish," she finishes carefully. "And on top of that, Almas are never famous in their own right. They're always married to famous males."

"Now that's not true," Rose emerges from the kitchenette. "I've heard of many famous Almas. Let me think. What about Alma Mahler?" She presents the piece of cake. "Let me tell you about this cheese cake. I got the recipe from Estelle Feurbaum. F-e-u-r-b-a-u-m. This woman was a legend in her time in the New York Hadassah. I'm telling you so her name won't be forgotten. If there were any justice in this world, *she* from all of us would be alive today recording her life for your book. Such a tragedy."

"What happened to her?" Alma asks. "What kind of tragedy?"

"Very great," says Rose. "If you won't taste, take a look at her recipe. You'll see what I mean."

RON watches Alma from the bed. Brushing out her wet hair, she stands with a towel draped over her cotton shirt. Plain and expensive, her clothes seem young for her. Not incongruous, but unforgiving. She buys jeans and dresses cut for her younger self, the waist she must have had in college, hips and breasts not yet thickened with extra weight. It makes him a little sad. Not because he didn't know her when she was younger; he believes her when she says she was a little bitch. It's just that it saddens him to think she dresses as she remembers herself. Still, she does it more out of habit than vanity. Her money is like that, too. A habit outgrown, but not outworn. It was something of a joke at the department when they first started going out. "She only wears jeans and old T shirts!" they said. "But have you noticed, they're never the same jeans and T shirts?"

Alma's cousin Liz is showing her pen-and-ink animals at the Royce Gallery, so they are going to the opening. They both hate gallery openings. Ron hates the people and Alma hates the art. It's one of her inherited pretensions; her mother is a collector.

"Tell me again why we're going to this thing," says Ron.

She turns on him. "Because it's her first show in three years! This is a very stressful point in her life. She really is marrying Tom this time and she needs reinforcement or she'll run back to Yosemite and you know she doesn't take care of herself out there—we've been through this before."

"Yes," he says, "but it's so funny."

She misses this last in the roar of her blow drier.

FROM the Royce Gallery Ron can see two others. One sells handpainted silk scarves and holds classes Mondays. The other offers handcrafted wood furniture—that is, if working out back with a Sears router counts as hand work. Besides the galleries there are boutiques with their starched Indian rags and ice-cream stores, bright and blank—room for standing customers only. Galleries are like that, too; nowhere to sit. Ron smiles when he thinks of Venice's old attractions. He used to take his day-campers to Muscle Beach for snow cones—strawberry, orange, grape, no gourmet flavors—and then for a tour of the Hyperion Treatment Plant. "How old are you?" his seven-year-olds asked him, and he told them he was ninety-nine. They believed him, too. Later on he went to the endangered-programs beach parties. Ethnic Studies would challenge Women's Studies for volleyball and afterward everyone sat on the sand and stuffed themselves with homemade food. Then a few people would stay and get stoned quietly under the stars.

In the chatter by the drinks table a long-legged woman leans toward him companionably. "I miss Venice," he tells her.

"This is Venice," she says.

He cups his hands and whispers in her ear, "I mean old Venice."

She clutches her drink. "What, Venice, Italy?"

Across the room, Alma squeezes her cousin's hand. "Hey," she says. "How do you feel?"

Liz stands with her arms at her sides watching the crowd. "I'm OK," she answers tremulously. "What are you doing nowadays?"

"Oral histories of women in Venice."

"Oh, wow," says Liz, "that must be a lot of work—"

"It is, " Alma cuts in, "but it's worth it. There's so much great material out there." She smiles quickly at Liz's fiancé and moves on to avoid his frozen black eyes.

The drawings crowd the walls in distressed wood frames. "Such fine draftsmanship," muses a salesman. Alma nods, but the fine detail disturbs her. The lines seem unnaturally concentrated, like leaf veins under a magnifying glass. Every quill on Liz's hedgehog is equally important, every hair on a mouse is equally focused. She draws with a hawk's-eye vision, Alma thinks, but there must be a way to draw with human sight. There has to be a rule for finding significant details, a method of selective focus. Moving to the open door for air, she finds herself staring at a small bronze of the Indian maiden Sacajawea. The stern figure stands slit-eyed against the elements. So powerful. So angry. Her hair thrown back in the wind. Her baby lodged like a stone against her heart. Her lips mute.

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The living room is stifling when they get home because whenever they leave the house they have to close and lock the windows for security. "I'm getting central air-conditioning," Alma announces.

Ron looks at her aghast. "That's ridiculous! Alma, this is just a brief heat wave!"

"This happens every summer," she says. "It's just beginning." She flips on the answering machine.

"Alma, it's Mom," enunciates Nan Renquist from the tape. "No message except I look forward to seeing you Saturday."

Ron scowls at the machine. "I'm not supervising any air-conditioning while you're gone," he tells Alma.

"No one asked you to." She watches the machine cycle through two hang-ups. Suddenly it crackles.

"This is Rose Markowitz. I am feeling very ill, my dear, and I would like to cancel the interview for Monday. Simone passed away yesterday. . . . "

"Shit!" Alma throws herself down on the rug.

"I haven't slept all night," Rose continues, "which is not unusual for me except that I had a terrifying dream which I hardly ever do. She was standing above me dressed in her terrible blue gown. An evening gown which she wore to the senior-citizens' dinners."

"Jesus!" Alma moans. "Simone was fine last week. I've got five weeks of tapes on her! What happened?" She flicks off the machine.

"Hey, I was listening to that." Ron flips the button.

The voice stretches on. "I told her at the time I thought the dress was inappropriate; it was foolish to wear a thing like that and threadbare, too. It looked shoddy, to tell the truth, and it was inappropriate to wear on this so-called bingo night. They all wear them of course. . . . " Her voice fades for a second. "When I saw her there she looked at me and looked and she wouldn't say anything and I kept calling her but she wouldn't answer me and I felt sure I was growing mad. There is a gentleman here they just took away with Alzheimer's mad as a hatter; he couldn't remember his own wife they said—she died two years ago. . . . "

"Would you turn that thing *off*?" Alma stamps into the other room, but Ron bends over the tape.

"So she wouldn't answer me. She just stood above my bed like a ghost until morning and now I feel terribly ill. She used to dream like this, you know, and now I'm dreaming the way she did. She used to smile and smile; she loved to sleep more and more, she said, and just before she passed away she dreamt she met her sweetheart looking just as he used to look—she saw him at Marina del Rey in her dream—and he told her, *'Je me souviens. Je me souviens, Simone. Je me souviens.*' And I asked her who is it who remembered you? She would just smile and smile. 'It was one of them,' she said. 'I'm not sure which.' " The tape cuts off.

Ron finds Alma curled up on the bed. "They'll all be dead by the time I finish," she sobs. "And I'll never get this done anyway because they don't understand what I'm doing at all! I talked to Rose's doctor, you know. She takes tranquilizers. Half the time she's blowing her mind on some form of Percodan. You heard her just now."

"She was great," says Ron.

"Don't you get sarcastic with me!"

"I'm not!" he says. "I think she's fascinating. You should copy the tape from the machine."

"You don't understand," she cries. "You think it's funny, but don't you see, all I have is tapes like that. Hours and hours of trivial reminiscences, insignificant data."

"Alma—" he puts his hand on her shoulder but she shakes him off.

"Can't you see," she gasps. "They're incoherent. They can't tell past and present apart. Half the time they don't know when they're awake or sleeping. I can't get facts or dates from them. Only these muddled stories. What kind of vehicle do I have here? What can I do with this shit?"

"Calm down," says Ron. "It's not worth getting upset about."

"Yes, it is worth it! I'd like to see you just once get upset about an idea!"

"Well," Ron smiles, "I don't have a religion like you. The thing is, though, you have to work with what you've got. I'll help you, but I'm not Robert Coles—what can I say?"

She laughs a little at this and turns over. "Oh God, Ron, I'm such a fool. Could you tell me in a non-patronizing way that you'll take care of me?"

"Give me a minute," he says wryly, but she's up and washing her face. "At least I won't have Rose on Monday," she sniffs. "I'll have a respite this weekend."

"Now *that's* dangerous. She'll convince you to give up. Your mother will talk you out of the whole thing."

"Thanks a lot! She's not talking me out of anything."

"We'll see," says Ron.

Ron doesn't know Alma's mother at all. When she calls she asks for Alma without identifying herself. And she never leaves messages with him. Only on the answering machine. He pictures Nan as Alma describes her—someone who smoothes away and subdues all opposition. He has his own private image of her, too, more place than person: windless rooms and vapid water. He imagines her house surrounded by still blue swimming pools.

He senses Nan's presence while Alma is away. He feels the way she pulls invisibly from her house outside the city so that Alma changes her plans and comes when she calls. Alma, otherwise strong-

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willed, indignant, earnest. Those were the qualities he first liked in her, and above all her energy. Not her arguments, he realizes now, but the way she argues, the way she jumps out of her chair, the way she laughs when cornered as if she could sweep away objections with her hands.

She's wonderful at protestations, manifestoes. An orator at picnics, flushed with sun and wine. He's heard the stories about her riding lessons, Mount Holyoke, her wedding afterward. They're in Egypt on their honeymoon and she's riding this stinking camel when these Bedouin women start following them. They're watching her, talking among themselves, and finally the old one comes up to her guide and starts pointing. The guide says, "They want to know how much your husband paid for you." So here she is, with this camel shitting underneath her, giving them the big speech about how in America you marry out of love; the man doesn't pay for you. The guide translates, and the Bedouins start up again, talking among themselves. Finally one points to her engagement ring. The guide says, "They want to know how much he paid for that." And seriously, she knew right there she was going to leave her husband. She's not going to get bought again.

He's laughed at this and he's waited straight-faced not to give it away and then watched the rest laugh. And now the story and the laughter afterward cycle together in his mind like dust and a record needle. It scratches him, it hurts him to remember how she tells this standing next to him, arms folded, eyes for her audience. Each time she loses something in the telling. Her tapes are like that, too. It shocks him how cheap she sounds. Everything fresh about her stripped to an insistent, alien voice. It's strange how delicate the old women sound in contrast. They speak without an end, and it's a kind of music, the long slow ramble of their voices.

"Now did Rose tell you about the ferns?" Eileen asks from tape E.M. 3. "Well, I came in to water; the two of them looked just pitiful to see. So I boiled some water because I'd read years ago tea was the fertilizer for ferns. I watered them with tea, cooled off, of course, and when I came in next morning they'd just perked right up—looked so much better, and all in one night! I kept house for my Daddy in West Virginia: I dug up two ferns from somewhere and planted them one on each side of the porch. I used tea, pots of it; kept it in the fridge and heated it a little to take the chill off, of course, and pretty soon those ferns were big like *this*. They used to stop on the road to take pictures of them. It was a cream farm. We sold cream once a week. The milk was for the pigs and the calves in spring. May to July, or was it August? I forget when the calves got milk. We raised most everything. Sold what was left over—we made certain there was plenty left to sell. That was the advantage for us children. If we raised tomatoes we got the cash. Yes, we took them to the produce market; the prices came from Pittsburgh—you could read them in the paper, and when radios came along you could hear them. When Dad died I didn't want to go back. . . . "

"But why? Why didn't you?" That was Alma.

"Oh, you know how it is."

"No, I don't know. Tell me why!"

It strikes Ron the way she spends herself on little questions. And they are little, they are trivial, he thinks.

ALMA has trouble sleeping at home. She unbinds herself from the tight sheets and slips downstairs. She wants to take a walk but can't remember how to turn off the new alarm system. As cluttered as Rose's place, she thinks as she paces through the house. Mom's clutter is older, though. The house stands like a retrospective exhibit of Mom's phases. Hopi pottery and shards of ancient blue glass, Roman coins, hand puppets and bas reliefs bought together in Indonesia. Mayan wood carvings. Most of her things are broken, and usually in a set there is one thing missing. Dad would point this out when Mom returned from her excursions. He would line up a set of graduated gold wire circlets and ask, "Now where are number two and five? Your mother buys seconds," he told Alma.

Even before Dad died Mom traveled alone. In the summers she took Alma with her—mostly to excavations. They went to Ashkelon once, and after high-school graduation, Pompeii and Herculaneum. Albums of pictures crowd the bookcases. It's frightening the way she keeps them among the artifacts. The photos themselves are such a mixture of dead and live things. Nan and Alma Renquist grinning in Pompeii among the corpses preserved where they went about their business. As Alma flips the album pages, it seems to her the ashen bodies on the streets look more alive, clutching themselves, doubled over, than the tourists frozen upright in the photos. What, after all, has Alma to do with the girl in white shorts? And what relation has her mother to this younger woman holding out something invisible and now forgotten in her hand? Rose and the others with old photo albums talk about themselves as girls, but they are speaking really of other people. Impatiently she forces the albums back on the shelves. They'd planned an early start to go riding the next day, but Alma sleeps through her alarm and Nan doesn't wake her. "You're exhausted," she murmurs when Alma appears for lunch.

"No I'm not," Alma contradicts.

They take a trail up above the canyon, and riding slowly they can feel the sky burning against the red hills. The clouds evaporate above them. "I can almost understand Liz out here," Alma tells her mother.

"She's really marrying him!" Nan says wonderingly. "I can't imagine what sort of children they'll have."

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"They won't have any."

"You never know," Nan smiles.

Alma bends over her horse. "I know."

"Are you still seeing—"

"Yes," says Alma. "We're sifting data."

"And then what?" Nan asks.

"Oh, God, I don't know." They stand at the edge of the canyon where the red walls break away to the bottom. "Maybe we'll break up." She looks at Nan slyly. "Maybe we'll get married. Mommy, I was teasing! I didn't mean anything. Besides, we're never *going* to finish the project, so you don't have to worry about what'll happen afterward."

"I do worry," says Nan. "I worry about the way you throw yourself into these projects without an end in sight. You don't consider what they cost you in time or—"

"Oh, say what you mean," Alma challenges. "It's not the project you're upset about."

"Don't finish my sentences. You work yourself into the ground with these interviews just the way you did with your thesis. And I don't care what kind of feminist-Marxism they taught you at Berkeley; you're acting compulsive. Just tell me honestly if you think this history project is going anywhere."

Alma blinks, but counters, "First you tell me if you're talking about the project or about Ron. You can't seem to separate the two."

"No, it's you who can't separate them," says Nan.

"ROSE called while you were gone," Ron tells her.

"I don't want to hear it," she says.

"Given up on her?"

Alma flings her backpack down. "Look, I don't have to transcribe every goddamn phone message. I don't have to be on call every waking hour. And that does not mean I've given up!"

"Welcome home," he says. "Glad to see you had such a good weekend."

She turns away. Sliding out one of her filing cabinets, she begins sorting the new batch of transcripts the typist delivered.

He picks up the paper. "Did she ask about me?" he asks.

"Sort of."

"What did she say?"

"I don't know. Nothing much. How am I supposed to remember blow by blow?"

"You're supposed to be an oral historian," he points out.

"Well, she's my *mother*, for God's sake. People don't listen to their mother." She brushes the hair out of her eyes. "I'm getting central air-conditioning. We can't work like this."

"Don't do me any favors with her money," mutters Ron.

"Who said it was for you?" she challenges, hurt. "I'm worried about Flush. Look at him. He's suffering in this house. Look at those eyes!" She tosses one of Eileen Meeker's files on the floor and sighs, "What do you make of this stuff?"

"I listened to some of it," he says carelessly.

"Here's what I've been thinking about Eileen," Alma says, "The key is, she doesn't go back to the farm. It's just before the war. The Depression is over; she joins the Marines. Now what do you make of that? The resources of the farm are depleted."

"If you want my opinion," Ron says, "what she's describing is how to revive dying ferns. And then she remembers the farm. Stop pushing it. Stop pushing all the time."

She slams the file drawer. "If you don't want to think about the analysis, then leave me alone and don't interfere with my work."

"Terrific. You wrap up the Inquisition and I'll finish my book."

"Oh, your book," she snaps. "As if I'm the one dragging you away from that! It was your idea, remember. You wanted to help me."

"That's right," says Ron, "and now I want to stop. I have perfect confidence in you. You know exactly what these women should say and I'm sure singlehandedly you can lead them to the truth about their lives."

"Oh, shut up!" she forces open a window. "You never wanted to help me, only criticize my work. You just want to control what I say. You don't want me to be independent."

"Oh, I don't!" laughs Ron. "Why don't you try that little speech on Mom. I know it works better on men, but I think if we're talking about control—"

"She does not control me!"

"Prove it," he says. "If she didn't—if you ever had the courage of your convictions—you would have married me."

"Don't flatter yourself!" she snaps.

He tilts his head and looks at her. "You're right," he concludes. "She doesn't control you. You're already just like her."

"You don't understand!"

"But I do," he says. "Your mother wants us to break up."

"Of course she does," Alma exclaims, "I'm her daughter!"

"So," Ron says, "does she object to me on principle or does she also object to Jews?"

"You don't even know her," cries Alma. "And I hate you and the way you twist what I say. Do you have to call my mother a racist to understand that she doesn't want me to marry you? Can't you comprehend this on any other level? It would destroy my relationship with her—"

"You mean she'd disinherit you. That's what you're saying."

"No!" she sobs in frustration, "I don't care about the money."

"Oh, Alma," he says, "you're such a hypocrite."

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"A GIRDLE," Rose tells her. "I'd never wear anything else. Some women over here wear whalebone. These old ladies promenading at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in their whalebone and gold lamé. Oof! They are so antiquated. I did see one whale, however. During the war, they took all the children to the Isle of Sandwich before they transported us to England. The Isle of Sandwich—and there was a whale on the beach; I still remember it. I was so small and frail they had to carry me everywhere. But after a few months at the convent I blossomed out. How I blossomed out!"

Alma doesn't have the energy to find a chronology in this. The Isle of Sandwich must be the Isle of Man. But she doesn't ask about it. Untangling seems so unimportant, questioning so futile. Rose spins out her own chronology, and she knows the places she has been.

"I still remember the day Caruso died," she continues seamlessly. "I was playing by the sea. Extra! Extra! Read all about it! The place is ordinary now, but in the 20's the resort was chic. Our governess had an operatic voice. She spent evenings at the piano and it was not unusual for a crowd to gather at the window. She was a lovely girl, but married quite beneath her." She frowns searchingly. "He was in the chicken business, I believe. When I came here from England, other girls my age were dating, and I was still a little girl, size seventeen, incidentally. How my cousins stared at me! Shainey called me the *Grina Cusina*—she got the name from the song, you know. But I had something they didn't. My complexion was like perfect makeup. It was peaches, it was pink, people turned around in the street. For my first date—do you know how old I was?" Alma looks up startled. "I was twenty-three," Rose says.

On their first date, Ron and Alma had gone to the opening of *The Birds* at UCLA. Swinging on trapezes above the audience the actors merged Aristophanes with lampoons of Reaganomics. Alma got a crick in her neck watching, but somehow they made it to intermission. "Dive Bomb!" headlined the review in the *Daily Bruin*. Then they went to a recital series by a cellist friend who looked so exalted when he played, Ron used to moan, "If only they could turn off the sound!"

"There was a young man I was sweet on," Rose muses. "And Shainey said to his real young lady: you have black eyebrows and yellow hair! That was unheard of. In those days it was unheard of to—to dissect people like that. But he wasn't the one, you know. When I first got engaged, my brother and my parents said they would never speak to me again. Alma!" she exclaims. "You're not listening."

Alma shakes herself. "Yes I am."

"But you look terrible! What is it, dear? You haven't said a word. What was that?"

"Nothing," Alma whispers. "My boyfriend left."

"Oh yes," Rose says, with perfect cognizance. "That's just what I was saying. My brother swore never to speak to me again or even utter my name in his house. He did it too!"

"He was Jewish," says Alma.

"Of course he was. All my husbands were Jewish."

"No, Ron." She wants overwhelmingly to run away, to break away from Rose and the long empty romance of Rose's life.

Rose considers Alma's case a moment. "Well," she concludes, "if he was Jewish, it was a good thing you parted. If you had married it would have broken his mother's heart! Anyway, they all thought he was no good. It turned out they were right, too. So I had to come back home. Can you imagine? Don't cry, dear. It was only my first marriage. It was very sad, but you know, somehow I lived through it! Don't feel bad."

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Heroes, Villains & SDI

THE MASTER OF THE GAME: PAUL NITZE AND THE NUCLEAR PEACE. By STROBE TALBOTT. *Knopf. 416 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DONALD KAGAN

THE idea of arms control is surprisingly old. Ancient writers mention a treaty between two Greek cities banning the use of missiles in battle as early as perhaps 700 B.C.E. (the missiles designated are arrows, javelins, and the shot hurled from slings). The Second Lateran Council in 1139 banned the use of arrows from bow and crossbow against Catholic Christians (although they were permitted against infidels and heretics.) Not until late in the 19th century, however, did a broad interest in controlling the use of weapons develop, and not until this century did it become a permanent feature of international relations, a full-time occupation and profession for experts, and the subject of a regular agency of the goverment of the United States.

Strobe Talbott is the Washington bureau chief for *Time* magazine who has made a specialty of the process of arms-control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The present volume is the third of a series beginning with *Endgame: The Inside Story of Salt II* (1979) and continuing with *Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control* (1984).

This latest volume is in some ways a continuation of the story of American arms-control efforts and policy in the years 1983-88, but it is also different, attempting to review "the history of the nuclear age through the career of one man," Paul Nitze.

It is not, however, a biography of Nitze. The narrative covers a longer stretch of time more superficially than the earlier books, providing a less satisfactory account of the recent period than it might; it also fails to give a clear understanding of Nitze, even in his capacity as an arms-control negotiator. There is no serious analysis of his thinking, and no satisfactory examination of the changes in the positions he has taken over the years.

Thus, Nitze helped negotiate SALT I but, as a key member of the Committee on the Present Danger, helped defeat SALT II. A hard-headed realist, he had no illusions about the dangerous character and intentions of the Soviet Union, about its willingness to employ nuclear blackmail, about the possibility of a nuclear war even in spite of the horrors it threatened and the need, therefore, to think about how such a war might be fought. He favored the development of the hydrogen bomb. He helped write the important directive NSC-68 that urged a massive rebuilding of American military strength in the face of a Soviet military threat. Yet he once advocated placing "the ultimate power of decision on the use of America's nuclear forces in the hands of the General Assembly of the United Nations." In an attempt to resolve the impasse in discussions over nuclear forces in Europe in 1982 he took an unauthorized "walk in the woods" with a Soviet negotiator during which he approved a plan that would have left the Soviets with 75 SS-20s and prevented the U.S. from installing any equivalent Pershing II missiles, a plan that was rejected by his own government and denounced by one critic as "an act of intellectual and political cowardice." At present he is skeptical about the value of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and eager to give it away as a bargaining chip in arms-control negotiations. So interesting and unusual a collection of opinions and actions demands a fuller and more coherent discussion than the reader can get from this book.

The problems created by the partial focus on Nitze raise the question of why Talbott chose to depart from his usual practice. His own answer is personal: he was a student at the Hotchkiss school during the Cuban missile crisis and was strongly affected by it. Not much later, Nitze, a Hotchkiss alumnus and an adviser of President Kennedy during the crisis, was honored by the school. Thereafter, Talbott associated Nitze with the crisis and with statesmanship of a high order, and their meetings years later confirmed his admiration, if they did not always produce agreement. That, as well, no doubt, as Nitze's important role in the history of arms control, explains the conception and organization of the book.

It is an appealing story but hardly adequate. To me a more functional explanation seems plausible. The focus on Nitze lends support and credibility to the author's attack on SDI and strategic defense in all of its aspects, as opposed to exclusive reliance on offensive weapons and Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). After all, if a tough old bird like Paul Nitze, whose credentials as a hard-liner and cold-warrior go back to the days of Truman and Acheson, is against SDI, what sensible person could be for it? And the fight against SDI is what this book is really about.

That may seem a harsh judgment in light of the claims on the dust jacket of this and an earlier volume that Talbott engages in "balanced, up-to-date reportage" and "never yields his objectivity," and that his work may be "read as history or as an exposé of drift and intrigue in quarters where the world has the right to expect far better"; but the evidence compels it. Talbott himself is more modest than the blurbs. He describes his work as journalism, not the ordinary weekly kind that he practices in his magazine and calls "the first

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draft of history," but "an attempt at a second draft." In fact, however, he has produced a piece of "new journalism," except that the new journalism is no longer new but is rather so pervasive as to have driven the old idea of objective reporting from the field as in Gresham's law bad money drives out good. To use Talbott's account, future historians will need to treat it like an unfriendly witness in a courtroom, asking it questions designed to distinguish observation from interpretation and mere prejudice from analysis. Much of the time the witness will be unable to answer, for often there is no analysis behind the prejudice.

THE new journalism, unlike the old, has heroes and villains, and they are not lacking in this volume. The chief villain is Richard Perle, right-hand man of still another arch-villain, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. These men are guilty of thinking ill of the Soviet Union, of being suspicious of its intentions and doubtful of its compliance with treaties, of believing that it had gained a dangerous military advantage in the 1970's, and of being determined not to allow that condition to persist. Weinberger, for example, had a "Churchill complex," and "often talked as though he saw the West approaching its darkest, most difficult, yet potentially finest hour, a twilight struggle against a latter-day Axis that ran from Moscow to Havana and Hanoi."

Weinberger, it appears, is only absurd. Perle, on the other hand, is really dangerous. Lest the reader miss the point, he is more than once referred to as "The Prince of Darkness." Unlike the hero of the story, Perle is "ideological." Perle's behavior is full of tricks and deception, and he argues all sides of all questions when it is convenient. "What was consistent was his distaste for arms control and his ingenuity in turning any situation to his advantage in the ongoing battle with the State Department."

It is far from clear that this is the only or even the best interpretation of Perle's performance, but no other is examined or considered. The greatest application of his allegedly diabolical skills is in the struggle over SDI, the center of this volume's concern. Perle, we are told, was against SDI from the first and never really cared about it, although he later became an advocate of it. Why the change? At the very least, the record seems to show that Perle liked the idea of using SDI to defend our own missiles against a Soviet first strike, but Talbott never grants the possibility that Perle had been persuaded of any of the system's virtues along the way. Instead, he tells us that "Perle set about to use the program to spike the wheels of the arms-control process so that the cause he cared about—unfettered military and political competition—could go forward." All Perle's public support of SDI, therefore, must be regarded as disingenuous.

FAR different is the treatment given to a striking change of direction on the part of Talbott's hero. Paul Nitze had helped negotiate SALT I and the ABM treaty, especially the language governing exotic technologies not yet discovered at the time of the negotiation. He had always insisted on the narrowest interpretation of that language, holding that it barred development and testing of defensive systems depending on new technologies. Such an interpretation, of course, would be a major barrier to SDI, and so Nitze understood it. But in 1985 he suddenly changed his mind, and agreed that development and testing were permitted. Why?

Nitze's own explanation is that he was persuaded by the arguments of Abraham Sofaer, a former federal judge who had become legal adviser in the State Department. His friends, we are told, were shocked by the conversion. "It's absurd to think that Sofaer could teach Paul anything he didn't know," said one. Talbott makes their shock the more understandable, for he presents Sofaer not as the lawyer and judge of extraordinary ability and integrity that he is but as a kind of high-level shyster. He cites so learned and objective a critic as Mario Cuomo to characterize him: "Abe Sofaer is a great New York lawyer. If they tell him 'Make it legal, Abe,' he'll make it legal." In Talbott's court Judge Sofaer gets no opportunity for rebuttal.

Nitze's friends tried to make excuses for his changed position: he was under pressure from the hawks, he was trying to defend his "right flank." Nitze himself flatly denies all this. He was simply persuaded by the argument. "I came away 100-percent convinced that the permissive, or broad, interpretation was correct." Talbott, for his part, does not make a clear choice between these views. A hostile interpreter might suggest that the defense offered by Nitze's friends actually amounts to an accusation of dishonesty and self-seeking: he was pretending to be converted in order to keep his position and his influence. Talbott seems to regard this possibility with a tolerance he does not accord to the behavior of Perle. In fact, I see no reason to doubt Nitze's integrity any more than there is reason to doubt Perle's, but in this book the hero and the villain are treated very differently.

NITZE, then, agrees with "The Prince of Darkness" on the unwelcome interpretation of ABM. For most of his long career, furthermore, he has been suspicious of the Soviet Union and its intentions, and critical of what he has deemed to be ill-advised arms-control proposals, in a way not shared by Talbott. What, now, makes him a hero? First, as I have suggested, is his opposition to the use of SDI as anything but a bargaining chip in negotiations for the control of offensive weapons in the traditional mode. But this is subordinate to his greater virtues: an unswerving loyalty to the process of arms control, a determination to continue "working the problem," as Nitze himself likes to put it, until an agreement is hammered out, an agreement that will maintain an arsenal of offensive nuclear weapons on each side.

These two related issues—opposition to SDI or any nuclear defense, and a powerful commitment to the arms-control process based on the MAD doctrine—are the ones Talbott himself feels most passionately about, and they place him powerfully at odds with Ronald

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Reagan, the man who almost single-handedly forced the nation and its defense and foreign-policy establishments to face the terrifying significance of our current stance. If we or our allies are attacked by the Soviet Union, the only choice we now have is between surrender and national suicide; moreover, even if MAD succeeds in deterring the Soviet Union, we have no defense against a nuclear weapon shot at us by any third power or terrorist group. Appalled by such prospects, as any intelligent civilized person should be, Reagan insisted that we make every effort to develop a defensive system, so that the world's security would no longer depend either on mutual good will or on mutual terror.

Talbott does not treat Reagan as a villain, but rather as an ignorant incompetent, a simpleton, a former actor inpelled by childish sentiments and dialogue from his old movies, "the dreamer-in-chief." Dispassionate readers may wonder how such an incompetent managed to win an overwhelming victory at the polls in 1984, fashioned the longest continuous economic prosperity in the nation's history, rebuilt America's military strength to the point where the Soviet Union thought it prudent eagerly to pursue arms-control agreements, negotiated the first arms-control agreement really to reduce, indeed to remove, a whole category of weapons, and has left office with the Soviets pressing for still further agreements. Talbott, undoubtedly, is among "those who saw the administration as having deserved its setbacks and stumbled into its successes," but only closed minds will agree.

Talbott's mind, in fact, seems remarkably closed, not only to contrary opinions, but also to relevant historical experience, to a sensible understanding of the goals of international relations and defense policy and what is required to succeed in them. He has an almost religious belief in the need for arms-control negotiations. He concluded *Endgame* in 1979 with horrified foreboding:

> Future historians might see the aftermath of the Vienna summit as the end of the détente era and the beginning of a new, protracted phase of higher costs and higher risks in Soviet-American relations, a phase characterized by increased political tension and military competition, without the benefit of strategic arms-limitation agreements—or even, perhaps, of strategic arms-limitation talks.

Not even talks! Yet somehow the world survived until the publication of Talbott's next book, which concluded with the failure of the INF and START negotiations. This, once again, was a dangerous development:

> The administration's conduct of the INF talks and START brought about an unprecedented crisis in the already strained quarter-century-old arms-control

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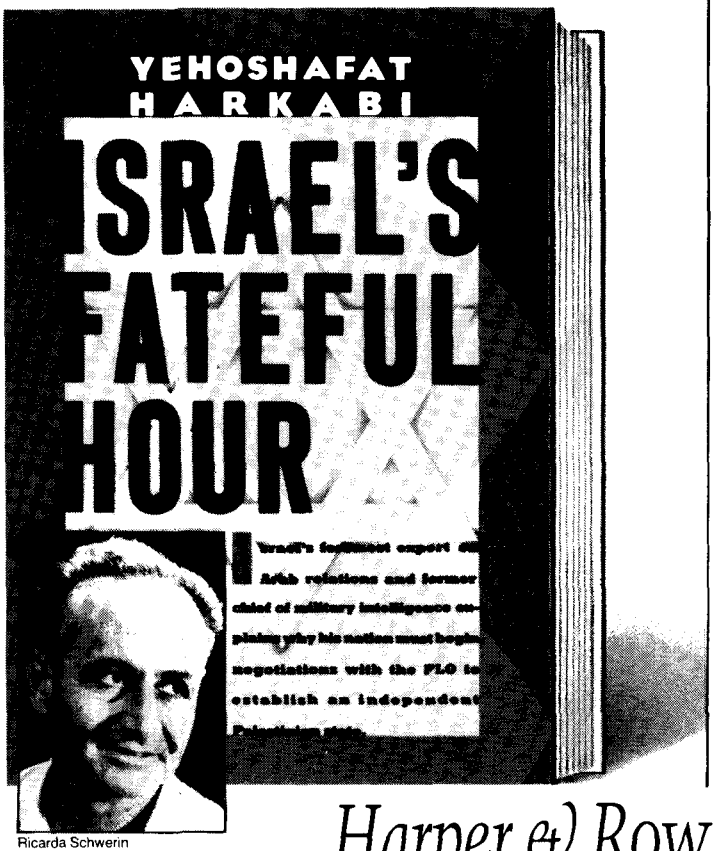

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process. And the crisis in arms control contributed to three others: in the alliance between the U.S. and Western Europe; in the partnership between the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government; and in the Soviet-American relationship.

Talbott's gloomy outlook in 1984 was as unjustified as it had been before. Arms-control talks resumed and produced unprecedented results; the NATO alliance was not weakened; strains between the executive and the legislature were no greater than usual when rival parties control separate branches; Soviet-American relations have become so warm as to arouse an entirely different set of worriers.

AT THE end of the current volume Talbott is less gloomy. Somehow, in spite of themselves, President Reagan and his administration stumbled into easier relations with the Soviet Union and an apparently irreversible progress toward arms control. Ronald Reagan, according to Talbott, had come into office planning a revolution in national security but had been forced by events to put up with a restoration of the old system—"a return to reliance on the strange safety of mutual deterrence and a renewed effort through arms control to make that condition less strange and more safe." Paul Nitze is a hero because, "of those who brought about that restoration, the most persistent and prominent" was he.

For all his admiration, I am not sure that Talbott has fully understood his hero. It is true that Nitze has always been eager "to work the problem" of arms control. But in his famous "walk in the woods," which especially won Talbott's heart, he seems for the moment to have lost sight of the larger dimensions of the problem. He tried to strike a deal that was not as good as could later be achieved, even in terms of the military hardware involved. Much more seriously, he agreed not to install the Pershing II missiles that represented the point at issue. Yet these were the only weapons the Soviets really feared; they represented the fulfillment of a promise to our allies on which Jimmy Carter had reneged; they were the main target of an enormous campaign directed by the Soviets and carried out by leftists in Europe and America. To have failed to install them would have been to fail a test of political will and capability that would have undermined the credibility of the entire American system of deterrence.

In fact, the installation and presence of the Pershing II missiles strengthened the alliance and America's position in respect to the Soviet Union. Instead of halting further discussions between the great rivals, they appear to have intensified the Soviets' desire to pursue them. Instead of alienating our allies, as was alleged at the time, they have become so dear to them as to cause an uproar when their removal from Europe was subsequently agreed to in the INF treaty.

SO NITZE made a big mistake at Geneva. But his words and deeds over a long and distinguished career show that he knows, as Talbott apparently does not, that continuing discussion, negotiation, and even international agreements should not be the goal of national-security policy or of the conduct of international relations. Instead, these should aim at defending the interests and security of our nation, pressing forward, where possible, the cause of freedom and democracy, and preserving the peace when that is the honorable course. Sometimes those goals require negotiation and discussion. Other times require strong military preparations and determination.

It is not easy, in fact, to find a period in history when arms control in itself contributed to avoiding war. It is even harder to see how a willingness to control weapons could have been helpful in resisting the Nazis, fascists, or Japanese militarists in the 1920's and 30's or how it could have helped avoid war without surrender. What was needed then, on the contrary, was more and better weapons in the right hands and a plain determination to use them when necessary.

In the dangerous modern world in which we live, especially one relying for its safety on deterrence through offensive weapons, that is a lesson that must not be forgotten, and Nitze has not forgotten it. There must be no automatic praise for talk, "moderation," and concession, or blame for choosing not to talk but to arm; each decison must be judged fairly in its context, and neither is inherently more inclined toward peace. Talbott's work lacks the small degree of sophistication needed to see this. His unspoken assumption is that all talk, all negotiation, is good, while its absence is always bad.

EVEN more remarkable is Talbott's simple rejection of SDI and all defensive strategies. He mentions but does not take the trouble to elaborate the three standard arguments: it won't work; it will be destabilizing; restraint on our side will produce restraint in return. Logic suggests that if the first argument is right, the others are irrelevant; but even apart from that objection, none of them is persuasive.

First, anyone in this century who bet against extraordinary and rapid technological progress in weapons or defenses against weapons would have lost repeatedly. The most memorable example is the hydrogen bomb, whose development was declared unlikely or far in the future or impossible by some of the same outstanding scientists who now insist on the impossibility of SDI.

The most common form of the second argument, that building defenses against missiles creates instability, ignores or underestimates the fact that the deterrence on which the current "stability" is alleged to rest will continue to function during a transition to defense. Even if the Soviets were driven by fear to consider launching a preemptive strike, they would still face the destruction of their cities. If they would not be deterred in those circumstances there is no reason to believe they would be deterred in any difficult situation. The logic of this second argument would prevent us from improving our relative position in any respect lest Soviet fear of an American advance, whether in defensive or offensive weapons, might trigger a preemptive attack. All this simply emphas-

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izes the danger of relyng exclusively on offensive nuclear weapons to maintain stability.

In response to the third argument, what are we to make of the phased-array radar facility at Krasnoyarsk? It is a clear violation of the ABM treaty, potentially a part of a working ABM system, and the Soviets to this very moment have flatly refused repeated requests to dismantle it. We first became aware of its existence in the mid-1970's when it was at least ten years beyond the planning stage. The Soviets, therefore, began to build an essential element of any ABM system even as they negotiated a treaty forbidding it.

We need to remember that a major argument for not proceeding with the hydrogen bomb was that restraint on our part might produce reciprocal restraint. It was not long before a nuclear explosion gave proof that the Soviets had been working on the bomb even as we talked. The Soviets are working hard on a defensive system today, and it would be foolish of us not to do the same.

Whatever the prospects may be for a total defense of populations, there is no doubt that a defense of weapons is possible right now and will be increasingly effective in the future. We need to remember that no arms-control agreement has ever prevented the development of new weapons or defenses. There is no reason to believe that the defensive genie can be put back in the bottle any more easily than the offensive one.

EXPERIENCE shows that exclusive reliance on either arm is folly. For centuries, castles gave a clear advantage to the defense, but the advent of gunpowder changed that until the development of new kinds of defensive structures restored the balance. Napoleon's offensive strategies dominated European thinking until World War I, when vast armies were led to destroy themselves by attacking against machine-guns and accurate long-range rifles fired from trenches and protected by barbed wire. That experience in turn convinced the French, among others, of the invulnerable superiority of defense, so they built the Maginot Line and refused even to consider any offensive strategy. When Hitler occupied the Rhineland, without which he never could have threatened French security, the French were thus unprepared to advance and drive him out. At the same time, defense against aerial bombardment was generally thought to be impossible; yet the British invested in research that unexpectedly produced radar, an aid to defense without which they could not have survived the Battle of Britain.

In warfare there is no escaping technological change, the unstable relationship between the power of offense and of defense, and the need to balance the two in the best way possible as circumstances change. The currently dominant but truly terrifying view, assumed without argument by Strobe Talbott, is

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strangely comfortable for those who cling to it so thoughtlessly and tenaciously because it is so familiar. But it is also foolish and dangerous.

Of course these opinions are arguable, and it would not be fair to criticize Talbott merely for not sharing them. What seems inexcusable, however, is that they get no proper hearing in a work that pretends to be a helpful account of the arguments on national-security policy. This is neither the first nor the second draft of any history worthy of the name. Interpretation is very much part of the historian's task, but that task includes presenting competing interpretations fairly, and showing by evidence and argument the superiority of one to the other. Nor should Talbott's kind of work be regarded as journalism at a high level, for good journalism is not tendentiously one-sided, it does not take for granted imported assumptions whose legitimacy must be demonstrated, and it does not caricature people of whom the author disapproves, but rather tries to help the reader understand them, even in their error.

"Torah and Science"

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF YESHIVA. By JEFFREY S. GUROCK. *Columbia University Press. 302 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by STEVEN BAYME

DURING his tenure as Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett frequently urged upon American universities a return to the traditional goals of an undergraduate liberal-arts education: instilling the core values of Western civilization, fostering a critical spirit of inquiry, cultivating an understanding of human nature, nurturing a sense of responsibility for the life of society.

Most of these traditional aims of higher education seem, in theory, compatible with the ideals of Jewish education as well. Jewish texts, too, seek to instill values, to uncover the wellsprings of human behavior, and to train students in critical modes of study and inquiry. But of course Jewish education as traditionally understood does not stop there; indeed, it does not even begin there. Rather, it subsumes these pursuits under a larger, more overarching aim—training the mind and heart in service to God and to Jewish religious law.

Are *those* two sides of education, namely, the secular and the religious, compatible? Can they be combined in any meaningful way? This is a question that has bedeviled modern Jewish scholarship on the one hand, and modern Jewish faith on the other. The resulting tension is perhaps most vividly expressed in the institutional history of Yeshiva University, the nation's largest and oldest university under Jewish auspices, which recently celebrated its centennial. In *The Men and Women of Yeshiva*, Jeffrey Gurock affords us a look at that institution's ongoing effort to synthesize traditional Judaism with the values of Western education.

Yeshiva originated as a traditional rabbinical school, its curriculum focusing exclusively on Talmud and Jewish religious law. Over the years, however, the school developed into a broadly conceived university under Orthodox auspices, offering advanced studies in a host of humanistic and scientific disciplines. Today the core is an undergraduate college at which students pursue a dual curriculum of Jewish studies in the morning and secular degree programs in the afternoon and evening. Yeshiva continues to provide rabbinical training, but its primary mandate has become one of educating young Orthodox Jews to function in the world of modern culture while remaining faithful to Jewish tradition.

The academic relationships between these two realms have not always been free of strain. To be sure, Bernard Revel, the university's first president, maintained strongly that Orthodoxy and secular scholarship—by which he meant not only the study of the humanities and sciences but also, perhaps more threateningly, the "scientific" study of Judaism itself—were indeed compatible. Revel, indeed, defied the wishes of many of his Talmud faculty and engaged "modern" scholars to teach Jewish history and Bible. Although in the academic study of Judaism Yeshiva has never been able to compete successfully with the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary or, latterly, with American universities, Revel's dream of establishing an institute for scholarly Jewish research has been realized today in the graduate school that bears his name.

It was during the presidency of Samuel Belkin (1943-75) that Yeshiva became a true university. Graduate and professional schools were established in social work, psychology, and medicine, and an undergraduate women's college was founded. Yeshiva also began to reach out to the broader Jewish community, attracting young men and women of Conservative and even occasionally Reform background to its Jewish-studies program.

GUROCK'S best chapters are on the 60's and 70's, when a new source of tension arose. Like their counterparts at secular universities in the 60's, many Yeshiva students in those years campaigned for civil rights and against the Vietnam war. Some volunteered their time to work with ghetto youngsters in the Washington Heights community where the university is located. Yet this was social activism with a difference, informed by debates unique to Yeshiva's Orthodox character.

One such debate was between Rabbis Irving Greenberg of the history department and Aharon Lichtenstein of the Talmud faculty. To Greenberg, students engaged in the civil-rights and antiwar movements were acting precisely out of the religious values represented by Yeshiva, and thus contributing to the "repair" of society. Lichtenstein did not altogther disagree in theory with Greenberg's line of thought, but argued that the ways of Torah were far more complicated, and

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more demanding, than what was suggested by the activist liberal social agenda of the 1960's. A different sort of ambivalence marked the position of Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Yeshiva's preeminent faculty member and the dean of the Talmud faculty. While respecting the commitments of the protesting students, Soloveitchik questioned the assumption that this war against Communism was in fact immoral, and he also raised the issue of the possibly harmful effect on Israel of a general weakening of America's international posture.

The debate between Greenberg and Lichtenstein/Soloveitchik, though real enough, nevertheless stayed within the framework of certain shared assumptions and beliefs. All three men were proponents of what is known as modern Orthodoxy, seeking in their various ways to promote that synthesis of "Torah and Science" that is the motto of Yeshiva. Still another central element in the modern Orthodox ethos can be seen at work in the longstanding commitment of Yeshiva faculty and students to Zionism. Yeshiva's original Teacher's Institute, with its Hebraic curriculum, was an early haven for religious Zionists. Virtually alone in the world of American yeshivas, the university has remained unswervingly faithful to Zionism and the state of Israel, where disproportionate numbers of its alumni have chosen to build their lives.

It must be added, though, that the institution has not been impervious to the more extreme elements of religious Zionism. Long after he had been ostracized by the mainstream Jewish community, for example, Meir Kahane remained one of the most popular and sought-after campus speakers. And there is widespread support at Yeshiva, both among faculty and students, for the Gush Emunim settlers on Israel's West Bank.

If this suggests a rightward religious drift at Yeshiva, other developments similarly add to the impression that the "Torah" side of the balance weighs more heavily than the "Science" side. According to Gurock, members of the Talmud faculty argue routinely that "secular pursuits [are] dangerous on many grounds." Yeshiva students frequently spend one or two years in an Israeli yeshiva studying Talmud exclusively, and only then return to fulfill the most basic liberal-arts requirements.

To complicate matters further, Yeshiva, like many other universities, has been affected by the turn toward professionalism in American higher education. In the 1970's virtually entire humanities departments disappeared or shrank to part-time status while courses in accounting and information science proliferated. Today's undergraduates tend to concentrate entirely in pre-professional areas; rarely in their undergraduate life are they exposed to the classics of Western intellectual history, literature, and political theory, much less compelled to assess their implications for Jewish thought and culture.

So the balance sheet is a mixed one. The institutional success of Yeshiva is undoubted, and it marks the maturation of Orthodoxy on American shores. Those religious Jews who repudiated America as a *"treyfe land,"* and those secularist Jews who dismissed Orthodoxy as an "intellectually bankrupt" tradition, have both been disproved. As Gurock shows, Yeshiva alumni serve with distinction in all walks of life, and they occupy positions of leadership in Jewish communities across the country. Many students at Yeshiva are easily the caliber of students at elite institutions of higher learning elsewhere. And in its current president, Norman Lamm, Yeshiva is fortunate to have an eloquent spokesman for academic excellence and for continued engagement with the broader society and the broader Jewish community.

Yet even as Lamm seeks to define a "centrist Orthodoxy," other voices within the world of Yeshiva now call for increased isolation, or justify retreat into personal or exclusively religious concerns. Whether Yeshiva will continue to uphold, as it once did, the indepen-

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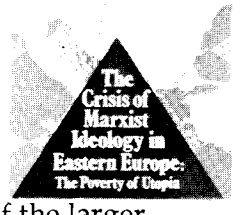

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dent value of a liberal education is a question whose answer will affect the very viability of the modern Orthodox synthesis in contemporary America. That answer is by no means clear.

Personal Accounts

INSIDE THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. By CONSTANTINE C. MENGES. *Simon & Schuster. 418 pp. $19.95.*

PERILOUS STATECRAFT: AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT OF THE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR. By MICHAEL A. LEDEEN. *Scribner's. 307 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID BROCK

EVEN before Ronald Reagan left office, a consensus was forming on his foreign-policy legacy. In the now-predominant view, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union have become stable, the cold war is all but over, and tantalizing prospects exist for negotiations on a whole gamut of issues from arms control to so-called regional conflicts to East-West trade. Some give credit to Reagan's defense build-up and diplomatic initiatives for taming Soviet ambitions, while others contend that the Soviet leadership has renounced its Leninist objectives largely as a consequence of internal factors, especially an economy in catastrophic decline. But these differences aside, there seems to be general agreement that the appropriate catchword for American policy in the new era is cooperation, not confrontation.

Oddly enough, the debate over Reagan's foreign policy was joined and ended without benefit of first-person testimony from any of the figures prominent in the making of that policy over the last eight years. (The 1985 memoir of former Secretary of State Alexander Haig seems an all but forgotten artifact.) But we now have two self-described "insider accounts," by Constantine C. Menges, the National Security Council assistant in charge of Latin American policy from 1983 to 1986, and Michael A. Ledeen, a special adviser on terrorism to Haig and later a consultant to the National Security Council during the conception of the notorious Iran-*contra* initiative. Both books bring fresh evidence to bear on the policy issues Reagan himself identified as his top priorities—countering Soviet-sponsored aggression in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, and Nicaragua, and dealing with international terrorism—and the critiques they offer invite a reconsideration of the conventional view of where we are today in meeting those challenges.

Menges was born in Turkey of German refugee parents, and his life's work has been shaped by the experience of having witnessed at first hand the "constant fear of people trapped in a totalitarian dictatorship." In 1968, spurred by events in Czechoslovakia, he wrote a paper for the Rand Corporation urging support for armed resistance movements against newly established Communist regimes, a precursor to what later would be called the Reagan Doctrine. Ledeen is a former academic, a journalist, and a sometime consultant on terrorism to the private sector as well as the government. He, too, has been closely associated with the idea of promoting "democratic revolution" in the Third World. When they entered government service, both Menges and Ledeen were thus allied with those officials, derided in more dovish Washington circles as "the war party," who were convinced that the West needed to build up its military power and to undertake forceful new initiatives against the Soviet proxy-states established in the 1970's. In essence, their books are accounts of why these ideas never really took hold under Reagan.

MENGES joined the administration in 1981, recruited by CIA director William Casey to be the national intelligence officer for Latin America; he moved to the National Security Council in 1983 and resigned under duress in 1986. As he sees it, the foreign policy which Reagan, upon entering office, was determined to put into place fell victim to a powerful and devious bureaucracy, centered in the senior career ranks of the State Department, that "could and would manipulate events to attain [its] own preferred course of action." The leitmotif of *Inside the National Security Council* is the story of how Menges, acting as the linchpin of a self-appointed "Reagan underground," forestalled but in the end failed to thwart a number of different attempts by this "subculture" to jettison the administration's policies in Nicaragua.

In each of the cases, the underlying conflict was between those, including Menges, for whom democratization was the *sine qua non* of any successful agreement with the Sandinista regime and those pressing for a negotiated political solution to the Nicaraguan civil war that would not require internal democracy there. In line with this fundamental disagreement, the former group insisted that military support continue until the resistance had the opportunity to contest for power under democratic political rules, while the latter group was willing to abandon U.S. support for the *contras* once the Sandinistas would agree to confine their revolution to their own borders. In pursuit of its goals, Menges writes, the latter group used "tools of deception," including the suppression of information, secret diplomatic contacts, leaks to the press, and forcing bureaucratic rivals out of "the loop."

Although the infighting Menges describes is historically far from unique, and may have been no more protracted than the celebrated tussles between Henry Kissinger and William Rogers in the Nixon administration, or between Zbigniew Brzezinski and Cyrus Vance in the Carter administration, *Inside the National Security Council* does convincingly document the furtive manner in which policy toward Nicaragua was conducted under Reagan.

Unfortunately, Menges's plodding tales of these machinations raise more questions than he is prepared to answer satisfactorily. For one thing, Menges himself, by his own testimony, employed tactics similar to those of his oppo-

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nents, a fact that seriously detracts from his thesis that they were solely responsible for abuses of the policy process. For another, from the examples of policy failure he provides one may more reasonably conclude that the real culprits, if that is the right word, were not to be found in the "subversive" foreign-policy "subculture" but among top Reagan political appointees like the National Security Adviser and the White House chief of staff.

Indeed, although Menges would be the last to admit it, a reader of this book would be fully entitled to conclude that in the end his real quarrel is with Ronald Reagan.

In *Perilous Statecraft,* Michael Ledeen does not let Reagan off so easily. Ledeen was the only American present during the initial secret talks with the Khomeini regime that devolved into the arms-for-hostages trade, some of the profits from which eventually went to the Nicaraguan resistance. He has said little in public about his role in the affair (having been denied the chance to testify before the congressional investigating committees) and therefore much of what he reports, from his fascinating characterization of the Iranian businessman Manucher Ghorbanifar to his informed deductions about the money trail, will be indispensable to students of the arcane initiative.

Of course, the serious reader will need to weigh Ledeen's version of events against other accounts. Although he promises in the preface to "set the record straight," much of what Ledeen does here is by way of settling old scores with personal enemies or bolstering the reputations of friends.

When it comes to the wider implications of the Iran-*contra* affair, Ledeen is firm in his judgment that the episode was not the aberration that others have called it but rather an almost inevitable consequence of Reagan's personal involvement. In contrast to his usual lackadaisical approach to foreign policy-making, in the initiatives toward Iran and Nicaragua Reagan was an active participant, overruling his advisers at crucial points to insist that things go forward. As Ledeen writes: "Reagan wanted the hostages out and he wanted the *contras* on the battlefield. . . . The basic policies were those the President strongly desired, and they were put into effect because of his formal approval."

The trouble is that these were not the only "basic policies" the President desired. In Ledeen's telling, the main obstacle faced by Menges and his faction was Reagan's failure fully to endorse their global views. "The activists never sold Reagan on rollback," as Ledeen puts it. Reagan and those closest to him—his wife Nancy, and top White House aides James Baker and Michael Deaver—saw the President's mission as the creation of a "new era of peace and harmony." Thus, although it was true that Reagan tended to go with the hardliners when yes-or-no decisions reached him, there was no guarantee that the next set of decisions would be consistent with the last. In the absence of a single overall policy, each "side" could believe it was pursuing Reagan's objectives while charging off in contradictory directions.

In the critical early years, when Central American leaders were privately urging the United States to adopt an aggressive anti-Sandinista program, the administration's effort was designed only to stop Sandinista subversion in neighboring El Salvador. When, in Ledeen's words, this "low-key strategy backfired" because of the "dazzling success" of the *contra* movement on the ground, the goal of American policy became more ambitious: internal democratic reform in Nicaragua. But by then it was too late: Congress, having never been presented with a serious program, had tied the administration's hands with the Boland amendments.

According to Ledeen, by 1985 Reagan was faced with the same dilemma Henry Kissinger had confronted in seeking and failing to get funding for the anti-Communist guerrillas in Angola ten years earlier. Should this defeat by Congress be accepted outright, in hopes of a later reversal, or should a "covert fix" be undertaken? Perhaps sensing that the public debate had already been forfeited, Reagan instructed Robert McFarlane, John Poindexter, and Oliver North to keep the *contras* alive "body and soul." To do so, the three turned to another initiative already in the works in Iran.

There, Ledeen writes, U.S. policy-makers were already searching for a more active role. There was concern over the stability of the

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regime and over the potential advantage the Soviet Union might gain in the situation. Because the CIA's analytical and operational capacities had been gutted in the Carter years, the government had little useful information about how to proceed. Hence the resort to extraordinary channels. At the outset, arm sales and hostage releases were designed as a series of reciprocal gestures to test the bona fides of "pro-Western" parties inside Iran itself, and also to find out how much control Iran exercised over terrorists in Lebanon.

There is some question as to when Ledeen came to realize that the arms deals were in fact only strengthening the Iranian radicals who supported international terrorism. He says it happened early on, but other accounts of the episode dispute his claim. In any case, as opposition to the initiative grew in the Cabinet, the McFarlane group resorted to increasingly obsessive secret operations, conducting the Iran initiative in much the same way it was then running the *contra* program. With Reagan, of course, the hostage-rescue effort gained a momentum of its own, undermining his anti-terrorism policy and the American position in the Middle East generally. "I don't care if I have to go to Leavenworth, I want the hostages out," Reagan is quoted as having said.

But, just as a stalemated administration had failed to make a case for a Nicaraguan policy and eventually surrendered to the Congress, so it again capitulated once news broke of the Iran-*contra* initiative. Rather than defending the goals it was trying to achieve, the administration, Ledeen asserts, actually encouraged the various investigators to focus on the issue of possible criminal wrongdoing. The White House sacrificed executive privilege by turning over sensitive CIA and NSC files first to the Tower Commission and then to the congressional investigating committees. In turn, these documents were published, leaked, distorted, and used to entrap witnesses in the congressional show trials. Even when presented with the gift of Oliver North's public testimony, which finally explained Reagan's main objectives with galvanizing clarity, the White House abandoned the field to its opponents who were bent on consolidating an unprecedented congressional power grab.

BOTH Ledeen and Menges left the administration disappointed men. In Menges's view, once the harder-line officials like him departed it was only a matter of time before the administration would embrace a "peace" plan for Central America like the one associated with the name of Oscar Arias, the president of Costa Rica. About this Menges is surely correct, but what he may not recognize is what Ledeen argues persuasively, that in the battle against Communist Nicaragua, the administration had adopted a hopelessly contradictory and hence losing strategy much earlier on. The consequences of this larger failure are likely to haunt us well into the future.

Manifest Perdition

A BRIGHT AND SHINING LIE: JOHN PAUL VANN AND AMERICA IN VIETNAM. By NEIL SHEEHAN. *Random House. 861 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE RUSSELL

THE Tet offensive occurred a generation ago; the panicky pullout from the rooftop of the U.S. embassy in Saigon is now thirteen years in the past. Many myths both about the American conduct of the Vietnam war and about the nature of the adversary faced by the U.S. have—or ought to have—died since then. To concentrate for a moment just on the enemy side, the Vietnamese Communists were held by many on the American Left to be mere nationalists; they were not. The Communists were said to be interested in no more than the "liberation" of their own land: instead, they have Prussianized the Indochinese peninsula. Even their vaunted pullout from Cambodia is, so far, no more than partial; if the Vietnamese do in fact leave, their likely aim is to install their favored faction of the Khmer Rouge in control. Years of boat people; years of famine; years of tyranny: in this era of *perestroika* everywhere, does anyone any longer have any illusions about Vietnam?

Of course they do. *A Bright and Shining Lie*, winner of the 1988 National Book Award, is proof. Its author, Neil Sheehan, ranks with David Halberstam as one of the best and brightest of the young American journalists who rose to the top of their profession for their reporting from Vietnam and ultimately for their opposition to the U.S. war effort. Sheehan covered Vietnam from 1962 to 1964 for United Press International, then returned in 1965 for the New York *Times*. In 1971, when he was the *Times*'s Pentagon correspondent, Sheehan's good friend Daniel Ellsberg made him a gift of the Pentagon Papers. Sheehan helped to make journalistic and constitutional history in the battle over publication of the Papers; he also won the *Times* a Pulitzer Prize gold medal for meritorious public service.

Those were epic days. Since then, Sheehan has spent a very considerable chunk of time—sixteen years—composing this work, an obsessively detailed tome about the war, told through the life and death of one man, a formidably dynamic, ceaselessly energetic warrior for the American cause who died in a helicopter crash in South Vietnam's central highlands in 1972. Sheehan's intention is nothing less than to make his protagonist, John Paul Vann, into a metaphor for the U.S. war effort, a metaphor for a certain brand of military attitude, and finally, a metaphor for a certain kind of American, if not for America itself.

Few people outside the operational vortex of the war and various power walkways in Washington knew much about John Paul Vann. He arrived in Vietnam as a U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel in 1962, retired in 1963, then returned to Southeast Asia in 1965 as a pacification representative for the Agency for International Development. Inside the Vietnam fraternity, however, he was very well

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known. Restless, virtually sleepless, a genius at organization and logistics, Vann made a deep mark on the war effort. At his funeral, the pallbearers included William Westmoreland, then Army Chief of Staff, and his deputies, Bruce Palmer, Jr. and Richard Stilwell. William Colby was another. Robert Komer, the guiding light of the Vietnam pacification campaign, was still another. A friend in attendance at Vann's funeral was Daniel Ellsberg, a recent convert to the antiwar effort from his job as a RAND Corporation defense analyst. Another was Neil Sheehan.

SHEEHAN knew Vann well (and through Vann had met Ellsberg). In fact Vann was one of Sheehan's most important sources during his own Vietnam years, just as he was the tutor of most of the bright young antiwar reporters, although they were not so antiwar then:

> Vann taught us the most, and one can truly say that without him, our reporting would not have been the same. . . . He gave us an expertise we lacked, a certitude that brought a qualitative change in what we wrote. . . . He transformed us into a band of reporters propounding the John Vann view of the war.

What was that view? Specifically, Vann saw that the Vietnamese Communists were winning the war where it counted, on the ground and amid the Vietnamese peasantry. Bombing and artillery fire would not destroy the enemy. Only persistent, coordinated military and political work, at close quarters, would do the job. But the military strategy espoused by Washington, as Vann saw it, was a ponderous, abstract logistical exercise, based on a concept of attrition that failed to come to grips with the political nature of the war and the revolutionary promises of the Communists.

An aggressive, articulate officer in the field, Vann drove himself to see the war as it was being conducted in the hinterlands, at tremendous physical risk that added to his mystique. He sent memos, he briefed highers-up, he schemed. To little avail. When bombarding headquarters from within did not work, Vann bombarded from without, through his press contacts. Thwarted as a military man, he came back as a civilian, and worked himself into a position of de-facto command of South Vietnamese forces. But his preferred instrument for fighting the war, the South Vietnamese themselves, failed—at least, they failed in terms that would satisfy a superpower ally which, after 1968, was increasingly absorbed by the process of military disengagement. In the end, Vann perished while beating back a North Vietnamese Army offensive that threatened to turn into a major South Vietnamese rout. What came afterward—three more years of conflict—is, to Sheehan, postlude.

VANN, then, failed to change the official strategy of the war. But what is more important, according to Sheehan, is that he failed, or refused, to see that the conflict itself was misguided. This failure goes to his very makeup as an American:

> Vann's political credo was the set of beliefs characteristic of the United States that had emerged from World War II as the greatest power on earth, the view of self and the world that had carried America to war in Vietnam in the fullness of this power. To Vann, other peoples were lesser peoples: it was the natural order of things that they accept American leadership. He was convinced that having gained the preeminence it had been destined to achieve, the United States would never relinquish the position. . . . He assumed that America's cause was always just, that while the United States might err, its intentions were always good . . . he saw much that was wrong about the war in Vietnam, but he could never bring himself to conclude that the war itself was wrong and unwinnable.

"He could not abide defeat, defeat for himself or for his vision of America." Why not? To answer that question, at least in terms of personal psychology, Sheehan spent an enormous amount of time and effort tracking Vann's origins. He uncovered a sad, even a poignant, tale of emotional neglect and sexual obsession, the tale of a man born in the redneck South to an alcoholic and a part-time prostitute, who eventually escaped the hell of his private life in the pursuit of far-off war. This, then, metaphorically speaking, is the dark underside of America in Vietnam, a saga of repressed emotions that tragically found their outlet in the wanton carnage of Southeast Asia.

THE problem with metaphor, even on this great expanse of canvas, is that it is a figure of speech. The connections it establishes between one thing and another are illusory. They stem from the nature of language rather than from the nature of things in themselves. This is a much greater problem for journalism than literature, and it shows, precisely, in Sheehan's grandiose determination to *make* something literary, something positively mythic, out of the materials of journalism.

Thus, Sheehan is scathing (as no doubt Vann was) about the stupidity and incompetence of various American generals in Vietnam, led by Westmoreland himself. Well, Westmoreland lost, and wars are lost for secular reasons that yield to secular analysis. For Sheehan, however, this is not enough: when it comes to the actions of his own country he is a Jansenist, a rigid determinist who sees in every secular outcome a rise or decline in the probability quotient of American salvation.

Actually, he sees only decline. This he traces backward in time from Vietnam to just after World War II. The moral rot in those years, he writes, was most apparent among U.S. military leaders, but there were others, too. In fact, it turns out that nearly everyone who was anyone in America was corrupt: "The attitude had spread as well to the greater part of the political, academic, and business leadership of the United States. . . . The elite of America had become stupefied by too much money, too many material resources, too much power, and too much success."

Sheehan picks up the scent again in South Korea, where, he asserts, the defeat of U.S.-led forces in 1950 was traceable to a failure of *virtu*

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on the part of Walton Walker, Douglas MacArthur's commander. Walker's troops, it seems, "had not been unduly distracted from what most, in these years without the draft, had enlisted to enjoy—submissive Japanese women and cheap whiskey." Similarly, the reason the members of the all-black 24th Infantry (disbanded in 1951) broke and ran repeatedly under Communist fire in Korea was that they had been forced for decades "into quartermaster and transportation units to fetch and carry for white warriors. . . . The troops of the 24th believed the myth of inferiority and repeatedly ran before the North Koreans." In other words, in Korea, as later in Vietnam, military failure was not military failure but evidence of a greater, spiritual lapse.

Sheehan's Jansenism extends to Vann himself. Vann's epic weakness was compulsive promiscuity, which Sheehan tracks in microscopic detail. Promiscuity is sexual deceit; Vann's great vice is therefore his personal deceitfulness—*he* is the "bright and shining lie" of the book's title (the phrase, in fact, is Vann's). When Vann retired from the Army Sheehan believed he did so in order to carry on his protests about the conduct of the war. But now he thinks that Vann's departure was due to a charge of statutory rape—dismissed—on his military record that forever blocked his promotion to general. Like America itself, then, Vann is a tissue of deception.

If, however, in American leaders Sheehan sees only "arrogance and professional corruption," he is astoundingly, even lyrically, admiring of the North Vietnamese Communist leadership—and in terms that smack, strangely enough, of 19th-century romantic theories of race, leadership, and nation:

> They were mandarins, Vietnamese aristocrats, the natural leaders of a people whom foreigners have repeatedly sought and failed to conquer and pacify. There are only a small number of such peoples on earth. The Irish are one. The Vietnamese are another. The violence of their resistance forms history and legend to remind the living that they must never shame the dead. . . .

To be sure, Sheehan chronicles Communist excesses—very briefly. The Stalinism of the North Vietnamese government in the land reform of the 1950's is mentioned, yet Sheehan quickly notes that "a Vietnamese government that made Vietnamese mistakes and sought to correct them in a Vietnamese way was granted a tolerance for abuse by its public which would have been denied to any foreign-sponsored regime." That is, one might add, it would be denied to any regime that did not maintain concentration camps.

One of the most significant silences in Sheehan's book concerns the role of the North Vietnamese Army in South Vietman. The first substantial admission of that role occurs on page 527. There, Sheehan argues that only in 1965 were North Vietnamese regulars "starting" to march down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to reinforce the native Vietcong guerrillas. In fact, as we know from Vietnamese documents themselves, North Vietnamese units began infiltrating much earlier. The silence is only explicable as a buttress to Sheehan's main thesis: that Communist aggression in Vietnam was organic, a response to "foreign" contamination.

For Sheehan, such contamination flowed, and presumably continues to flow, from one source only, the *corrupt and corrupting phenomenon* of postwar American internationalism. It would be easy to link Sheehan's teleology of manifest American perdition to a Marxist view of history. Actually, however, his extravagantly judgmental book is marked by a total absence of what Marxists like to call "scientific ideas." Rather, his sympathies and antipathies seem entirely cultural, or perhaps even religious, in tenor, springing from a metaphysical vision of America as an incarnation of material corruption on the world scene. This, at any rate, would appear to be the unargued view which informs and in the end defines his tortured resurrection of the corpse of John Paul Vann. The honors heaped upon his work seem to suggest that in spite of everything we have learned about the Vietnam war since 1975, Neil Sheehan is far from alone in holding onto the antiwar movement's furious if discredited interpretation of that conflict.

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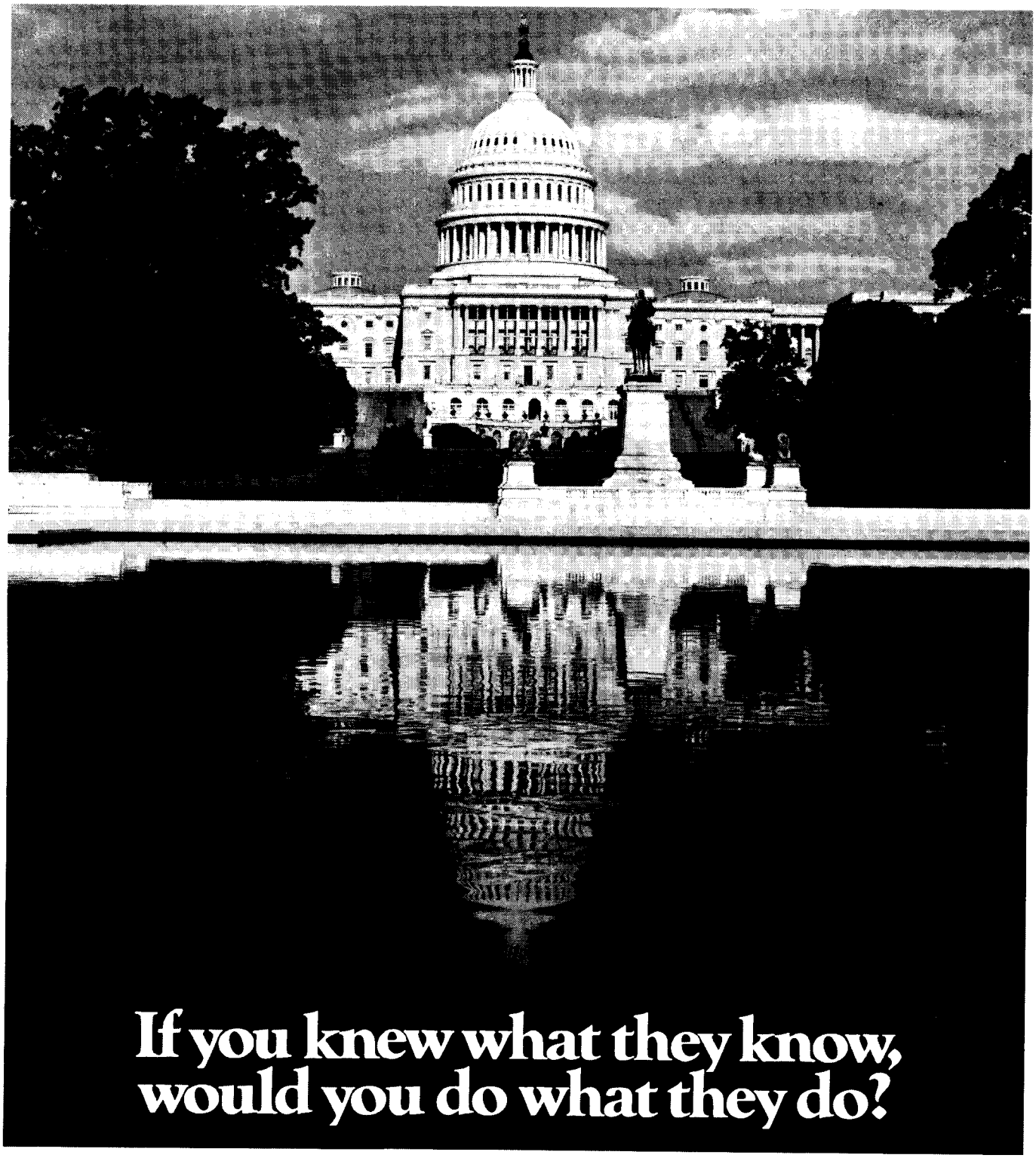

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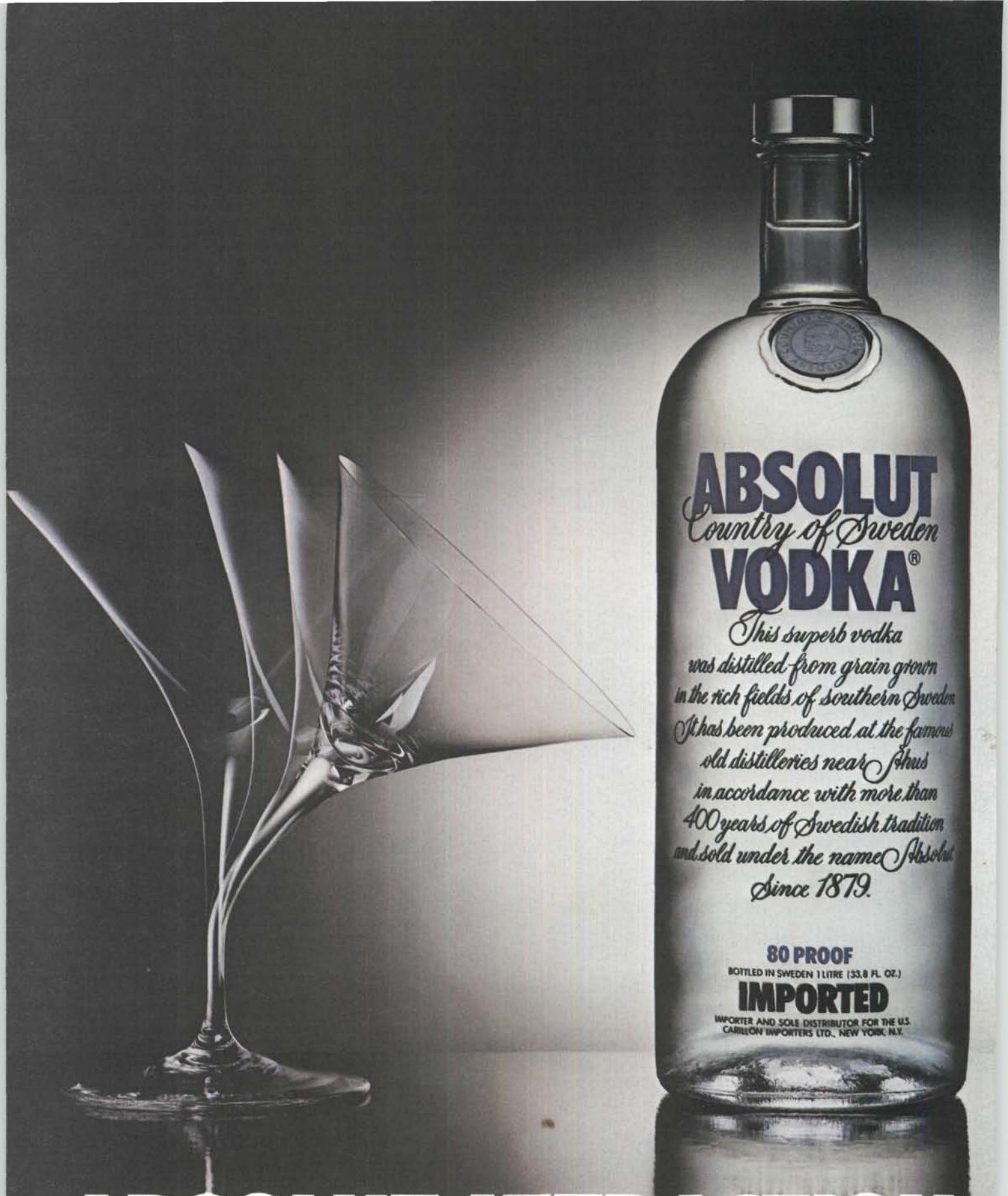
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